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POETICAL WALTON

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S BARONET



NEW YORK

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THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
" "

CONTAINING

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, MARMION, LADY OF THE
LAKE, DON RODERICK, ROKEBY, BALLADS,
LYRICS, AND SONGS.

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.



DANIEL NOBLE JOHNSON.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was one of the sons of Walter Scott, Esq., writer to the signet, by Anne, daughter of Dr John Rutherford, professor of the practice of medicine, in the university of Edinburgh; and was born in that city, on the fifteenth of August, 1771, being the third of a family consisting of six sons and one daughter. His paternal grandfather, Mr Robert Scott, farmer at Sandyknow, in the vicinity of Smailholm Tower, in Roxburghshire, was the son of Mr Walter Scott, a younger son of Walter Scott of Raeburn, third son of Sir William Scott of Harden.

The above-mentioned Walter lived at the time of the restoration, and embraced the tenets of quakerism; but for this he endured no little persecution, both from Presbyterian and Episcopalian. Walter, the second son of this gentleman, and father to the novelist's grandfather, was so zealous a Jacobite, that he made a vow never to shave his beard till the exiled house of Stuart should be restored, whence he acquired the name of *Beardie*.

Dr John Rutherford, maternal grandfather to the subject of this memoir, and one of the pupils of Boerhaave, was the first professor of the practice of physic in the university of Edinburgh, to which office he was elected in 1727, and which he resigned in 1766, in favour of the celebrated Dr John Gregory. His

wife, the maternal grandmother of Sir Walter, was Jean Swinton, daughter of Swinton, in Berwickshire, one of the oldest families in Scotland, and at one period very powerful. Sir Walter has introduced a chivalric representative of this race into his drama of "Halidon Hill."

Existence opened upon the author of Waverley, in one of the duskiest parts of the northern capital, which was the head of the College Wynd, a narrow alley leading from the Cowgate to the gate of the college; and before he was two years old, he received a fall out of the arms of a careless nurse, which injured his right foot, and rendered him lame for life; but this accident did not otherwise affect his health or general activity. His mother, who had a taste for poetry, and was intimately acquainted with the poets of her day, particularly Ramsay, Blacklock, Beattie, and Burns, is said to have shown a mother's fondness when the boy made his first attempt at verse. Before Sir Walter could receive any impressions from the romantic scenery of the old town of Edinburgh, he was removed, on account of the delicacy of his health, to the country, and lived for a considerable period under the charge of his paternal grandfather at Sandyknow. This farm is situate upon a rising ground, near the bottom of Leader Water, and overlooks a large part of the vale of Tweed. In the immediate neighbourhood of the farm-house, upon a rocky foundation, stood the Border fortlet called Smailholm Tower, which possessed many features to attract the attention of the young poet. At the "evening fire" of Sandyknow also, Sir Walter learned much of that Border lore which he afterwards wrought up in his fictions.

After having undergone the usual routine of juvenile instruction, Sir Walter became a pupil in the High School of Edinburgh; but as a scholar, he appears to have been by no means remarkable for proficiency. There is his own authority for saying, that even in the exercise of metrical translation, he fell far short of some of his companions; although others pretend that this was a department in which he always manifested a superiority. There is one anecdote, however, worth preserving, connected with this

period. It is said, that Burns, while at Professor Ferguson's one day, was struck by some lines attached to a print of a soldier dying in the snow. He inquired by whom they were written—and none of the company having returned answer,—after a pause, the youthful poet replied, "They are by Langhorne."—Burns fixed his large bright eyes on the boy, and striding up to him, said, "It is no common course of reading which has taught you this: this lad will be heard of yet."

With regard to Sir Walter's inclination for fictitious story, we have his own testimony, at the distance of nearly half a century, for this habit of his early youth: "I must refer to a very early period of my life, were I to point out my first achievements as a tale-teller; but I believe some of my old school-fellows can still bear witness that I had a distinguished character for that talent, at a time when the applause of my companions was my recompense for the disgraces and punishments which the future romance-writer incurred for being idle himself, and keeping others idle, during hours that should have been employed on our tasks. The chief enjoyment of my holidays was to escape with a chosen friend, who had the same taste with myself, and alternately to recite to each other such wild adventures as we were able to devise. We told, each in turn, interminable tales of knight-errantry, and battles, and enchantments, which were continued from one day to another as opportunity offered, without our ever thinking of bringing them to a conclusion. As we observed a strict secrecy on the subject of this intercourse, it acquired all the character of concealed pleasure: and we used to select for the scenes of our indulgence, long walks through the solitary and romantic environs of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, Braid Hills, and similar places in the vicinity of Edinburgh; and the recollection of those holidays still forms an *oasis* in the pilgrimage which I have to look back upon."

After having been two years under the rector of the High School, Sir Walter entered himself, in 1783, for the Humanity or Latin class in the university of Edinburgh, under Professor Hill, and the Greek class

under Professor Dalzell; and for the latter, once more, in 1784. But the only other class for which he seems to have matriculated at the College, was that of Logic, under Professor Bruce, in 1785. Although he may perhaps have attended other classes without matriculation, there is reason to believe that his irregular health produced a corresponding irregularity in his academical studies. The result, it is to be feared, was, that he entered life much in the condition of his illustrious prototype, the bard of Avon—that is, “with a little Latin and less Greek.” He had now given up the character of a student, with the intention of preparing himself for the bar, when he was overtaken by a severe illness; an account of which, and its important effects on his future character and course, he has thus given in the autobiographical chapter formerly referred to:—

“When boyhood advancing into youth required more serious studies and graver cares, a long illness threw me back on the kingdom of fiction, as if it were by a species of fatality. My indisposition arose, in part at least, from my having broken a blood-vessel; and motion and speech were for a long time pronounced positively dangerous. For several weeks I was confined strictly to bed, during which time I was not allowed to speak above a whisper, to eat more than a spoonful or two of boiled rice, or to have more covering than one thin counterpane. When the reader is informed that I was at this time a growing youth, with the spirits, appetite, and impatience of fifteen, and suffered, of course, greatly under this severe regimen, which the repeated return of my disorder rendered indispensable, he will not be surprised that I was abandoned to my own discretion, so far as reading (my almost sole amusement) was concerned, and still less so, that I abused the indulgence which left my time so much at my own disposal.

“There was at this time a circulating library at Edinburgh, founded, I believe, by the celebrated Allan Ramsay, which, besides containing a most respectable collection of books of every description, was, as might have been expected, peculiarly rich in works of fiction. It exhibited specimens of every kind, from

the romances of chivalry, and the ponderous folios of Cyrus and Cassandra, down to the most approved works of later times. I was plunged into this great ocean of reading without compass or pilot; and unless when some one had the charity to play at chess with me, I was allowed to do nothing save read, from morning to night. I was, in kindness and pity, which was perhaps erroneous, however natural, permitted to select my subjects of study at my own pleasure, upon the same principle that the humours of children are indulged to keep them out of mischief. As my taste and appetite were gratified in nothing else, I indemnified myself by becoming a glutton of books. Accordingly, I believe I read almost all the old romances, old plays, and epic poetry, in that formidable collection, and no doubt was unconsciously amassing materials for the task in which it has been my lot to be so much employed.

“At the same time, I did not in all respects abuse the license permitted me. Familiar acquaintance with the specious miracles of fiction brought with it some degree of satiety, and I began by degrees to seek in histories, memoirs, voyages and travels, and the like, events nearly as wonderful as those which were the work of the imagination, with the additional advantage that they were, at least, in a great measure true. The lapse of nearly two years, during which I was left to the service of my own free will, was followed by a temporary residence in the country, where I was again very lonely, but for the amusement which I derived from a good though old-fashioned library. The vague and wild use which I made of this advantage I cannot describe better than by referring my reader to the desultory studies of Waverley in a similar situation; the passages concerning whose reading were imitated from recollections of my own.”

His two years' residence in the country completely restored his health, and as it was necessary to pursue his studies for the bar, he attended the lectures of professor Dick on civil law, in the college, and performed the duties of a writer's apprentice under his father. In alluding to this period he says: “The severe studies necessary to render me fit for my profession, occupied the greatest part of my time, and the

society of my friends and companions, who were about to enter life along with me, filled up the interval with the usual amusements of young men. I was in a situation which rendered serious labour indispensable; for, neither possessing, on the one hand, any of those peculiar advantages which are supposed to favour a hasty advance in the profession of the law, nor being on the other hand exposed to unusual obstacles to interrupt my progress, I might reasonably expect to succeed according to the greater or less degree of trouble which I should take to qualify myself as a pleader."

On the 10th of July, 1792, when just on the point of completing his twenty-first year, he was called to the bar as an advocate, and enabled, by the affluence of his father, to begin life in an elegant house in a fashionable part of the town; but it was not his lot to acquire either wealth or distinction at the bar. The truth is, his mind was not yet emancipated from that enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge which had distinguished his youth. His necessities, were not so great as to make an exclusive application to his profession imperative; and he therefore seemed destined to join, what a sarcastic barrister has termed, "the ranks of the gentlemen who are not anxious for business." Although he could speak readily and fluently at the bar, his intellect was not at all of a forensic cast. He appeared to be too much of the abstract and unworldly scholar, to assume readily the habits of an adroit pleader; and, even although he had been perfectly competent to the duties, it is a question if his external aspect and general reputation would have permitted the generality of agents to intrust them to his hands.

At the time when Sir Walter entered public life, almost all the respectable part of the community were indignant at the hostile menaces of France; and numerous bodies of volunteer militia were consequently formed to meet the threatened invasion. In the beginning of 1797, the gentlemen of Mid-Lothian imitated the example, by embodying themselves in a cavalry corps, under the name of the Royal Mid-Lothian Regiment of Cavalry; and Mr Walter Scott had the honour to be appointed its adjutant, for which

office his lameness was considered no bar. He was a very zealous officer, and highly popular in the regiment, on account of his extreme good-humour and powers of social entertainment; and his appointment led to an intimacy with the most considerable man of his name, Henry, duke of Buccleuch, and Mr Henry Dundas, who was now one of his Majesty's secretaries of state, and a lively promoter of the scheme of national defence in Scotland. It was about this time that he became known amongst a few of his friends as a poet; and, in alluding to this period of his life, he has thus given an account of the circumstances which led him to cultivate poetry.

During the last ten years of the eighteenth century, the art of poetry was at a remarkably low ebb in Britain. Hayley, to whom fashion had some years before ascribed a higher degree of reputation than posterity has confirmed, had now lost his reputation for talent, though he still lived admired and respected as an amiable and accomplished man. The Bard of Memory slumbered on his laurels, and he of Hope had scarce begun to attract his share of public attention. Cowper, a poet of deep feeling and bright genius, was dead, and, even while alive, the hypochondria, which was his mental malady, impeded his popularity. Burns, whose genius our southern neighbours could hardly yet comprehend, had long confined himself to song-writing.

Mr Henry Mackenzie was the first to direct the attention of the Scottish literati to German literature, by a paper which he read to the Edinburgh Royal Society, in August, 1788. On this subject, Sir Walter continues—

“The remarkable coincidence between the German language and that of the Lowland Scottish, encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered mine; a class was formed, of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of living much together, and the time they spent in this study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, adverse to the necessary toils of grammar and its rules, was in

th practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and, of course, frequently committing blunders, which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions."

About this period—that is, in the year 1793 or 1794—Mrs Barbauld paid a visit to Edinburgh. She lived in the house of Professor Dugald Stewart, and one evening she astonished the family circle to a great degree, by reading aloud a translation of Burger's "Lenore," executed by Mr Taylor of Norwich. A friend who had heard it, told Sir Walter what impression the recitation had occasioned, and repeated to him the rude but striking passage, descriptive of the supernatural speed of the ghostly horseman and his mistress:—

"Tramp, tramp, along the land they rode,
 Splash, splash, along the sea,
 Hurra, the dead can ride apace,
 Dost fear to ride with me?"

Inspired with a strong desire to see the original, Sir Walter, with great difficulty, obtained a copy from Germany, through the kind offices of Mrs Scott of Harden, who was a German by birth. "The perusal," says Sir Walter, "rather exceeded than disappointed the expectations which the report of Mr Stewart's family had induced me to form; and the book had only been a few hours in my possession, when I found myself giving an animated account of the poem to a friend, and rashly added a promise to furnish a copy in English ballad verse. I well recollect that I began my task after supper, and finished it about daybreak the next morning, (it consists of sixty-six stanzas,) by which time the ideas which the task had a tendency to summon up were rather of an uncomfortable character."

The young poet was so much pleased with his success on this occasion, as to attempt a few more translations from Burger, particularly of the poem entitled "Der Wilde Jager." "In the course of a few weeks," says he, "my own vanity, and the favourable opinion of my friends, interested by the revival of a species of poetry, containing a germ of popularity, of which, perhaps, they were not themselves aware,

urged me to the decisive step of sending a selection, at least, of my translations to the press, to save the numerous applications which were made for copies. When was an author deaf to such a recommendation? In 1796, the present author was prevailed on, by request of friends, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of 'Lenore,' with that of 'The Wild Huntsman,' in a thin quarto. . . . The fate of this, my first publication, was by no means flattering. I distributed so many copies among my friends, as materially to interfere with the sale; and the number of translations which appeared in England about the same time, including that of Mr Taylor, to whom I had been so much indebted, and which was published in the Monthly Magazine, were sufficient to exclude a provincial writer from competition In a word, my adventure proved a dead loss; and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunkmaker." This failure, instead of disposing the new-fledged bard to retire from the field of letters, rather tempted him to proceed, in order "to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice." He pursued the German language keenly, procured more books in that language from their native country, and extended his views to the dramatic authors, so that early in 1799, he published "Goetz of Berlichingen, a tragedy translated from Goethe."

The next efforts of Sir Walter Scott were of higher promise and power, but still they were as much anti-quarian as poetical; we allude to his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and his "Sir Tristrem." The vein of poetry was by this time discovered, and the request of Monk Lewis to contribute to his Tales of Wonder, soon determined Scott's career. "Glenfinlas," "The Baron of Smaylhome," and "The Fire-King," were the gems of the book; and poor Lewis, then at the head of the ballad school of diablerie, found himself in the predicament of a sorcerer who has evoked a demon so much more powerful than himself as to deprive him of his wand. From that period the destiny of Sir Walter Scott was fixed—he set up, to use his own words, like a hawk, on the strength of a couple of ballads.

On Christmas eve, 1797, Sir Walter was married to Miss Margaret Carpenter, daughter of the deceased John Carpenter, Esq., of the city of Lyons, a gentleman who had fallen a victim to the excesses of the French revolution. Soon after his marriage, he established himself, during the vacations, in a delightful retreat at Laswade, on the banks of the Esk, about five miles to the south of Edinburgh.

For some years before the end of the century, Sir Walter had been in the habit of making, periodically, what he called "raids" into Liddesdale, for the purpose of collecting the ballad poetry of that romantic and most primitive district. He travelled thither, from Roxburghshire, in an old gig, which also contained his early friend and local guide, Mr Robert Shortreed of Jedburgh, sheriff-substitute of the county. Introduced by this gentleman, Sir Walter paid visits to many of the farmers and small proprietors, among whom, or among their retainers, he picked up several capital specimens of the popular poetry of the district, descriptive of adventures of renown which took place in the days of yore, besides impressing his mind with that perception of the character of the people, which he afterwards imbodyed in his *Dandie Dinmont*. Mr Shortreed, who was a most intelligent person, used to relate an amusing anecdote, illustrative of the shy manners of this sequestered race. On visiting a particular person, whose name and place of residence are sufficiently indicated by his usual designation of "Willie o' Milburn," the honest farmer was from home, but returned while Sir Walter was tying up his horse in the stable. On being told by Mr Shortreed that an Edinburgh advocate was come to see him, he expressed great alarm, and even terror, as to the character of his visitor,—the old fear of the law being still so very rife in Liddesdale as even to extend to the simple person of any of its administrators. What idea Willie had formed of an Edinburgh barrister cannot exactly be defined; but, having gone out to reconnoitre, he soon after came back with a countenance of so mirthful a cast as evidently bespoke a relieved mind. "Is yon the advocate?" he inquired of Mr Shortreed. "Yes, Willie," answered that gentleman. "Deil o' me's feared for them,

then," cried the farmer; "you's just a chield like oursells!"

It was not alone necessary on such occasions to write down old ballads from recitation, but to store up the materials of notes by which the ballads themselves might be illustrated. On this account Scott visited many scenes alluded to in the metrical narratives, and opened his ear to all the local anecdotes and legends which were handed down by the peasantry. He had a most peculiar, and even mysterious mode of committing these to memory. He used neither pencil nor pen, but seizing upon any twig or piece of wood which he could find, marked it by means of a clasp-knife, with various notches, representing particular ideas in his own mind; and these afterwards were strung up before him in his study at home, like the *nick-sticks* over a baker's desk, or the string-alphabet of a blind man. He seemed to have invented this algebraic system of memorandum-making for his own use; and, to all appearance, was as conversant with its mysteries as he could be with the more common accomplishment of writing. When his own pockets were inconveniently stuffed with notes, he would request Mr Shortreed to take charge of a few; and often that gentleman has discharged as much timber from his various integuments, as, to use his own phrase, quoted from Burns, might have mended a mill. The truth is, Sir Walter was blessed with a memory of extraordinary power, so that a very slight notation was necessary to bring to his recollection anything he had ever heard. The collections of Scott in Liddesdale, joined to various contributions from reciters in other parts of the country, formed his first publication of note, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This work which was issued in 1802, displayed a vast quantity of curious and abstruse learning; and, in particular, a most intimate acquaintance with a district of Scotland which had hitherto received hardly any attention either from the historian or the antiquary. Previous to this period—in December, 1799—he had been appointed sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office which rendered it necessary that he should reside a certain part of the year in Selkirkshire; and he therefore engaged the house of Ashie-

steil, on the banks of the Tweed, which continued to be his country residence till he removed to Abbotsford. In 1804, Mr Scott increased his reputation as a literary antiquary, by publishing the ancient minstrel tale of "Sir Tristrem," which he showed, in a learned disquisition, to have been composed by Thomas of Ercildoune, commonly called Thomas the Rhymer, who flourished in the thirteenth century. By this publication, it was established that the earliest existing poem in the English language was written by a native of the Lowlands of Scotland.

But for the ensuing circumstances of the poet's life, it will be best to resort to his own narrative, introductory to a late edition of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

The history of the rise and progress of this poem, the author has himself thus related:—

"The lovely young countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet, duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband, with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs. She soon heard enough of Border lore: among others, an aged gentleman of property, near Langholm, (Mr Stoddart,) communicated to her ladyship the story of Gilpin Horner, a tradition in which the narrator, and many more of that county, were firm believers. The young countess, much delighted with the legend, and the gravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined it on me as a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was in fact, the occasion of its being written.

"It was, to the best of my recollection, more than a year after Mr Stoddart's visit, that, by way of experiment, I composed the first two or three stanzas of 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel.' I was shortly afterwards visited by two intimate friends, whom I was in the habit of consulting on my attempts at composition, having equal confidence in their sound taste and friendly sincerity. In this specimen I had, in the phrase of the Highland servant, packed all that was my own, *at least*, for I had also included a line of invocation, a little softened, from Coleridge—

'Mary, mother, shield us well.

As neither of my friends said much to me on the subject of the stanzas I showed them before their departure, I had no doubt that their disgust had been greater than their good nature chose to express. Looking upon them, therefore, as a failure, I threw the manuscript into the fire, and thought as little more as I could of the matter. Some time afterwards, I met one of my two counsellors, who inquired, with considerable appearance of interest, about the progress of the romance I had commenced, and was greatly surprised at learning its fate. He confessed that neither he nor our mutual friend had been at first able to give a precise opinion on a poem so much out of the common road; but that as they walked home together to the city, they had talked much on the subject, and the result was an earnest desire that I would proceed with the composition.

"The poem, being once licensed by the critics as fit for the market, was soon finished, proceeding at about the rate of a canto per week. There was, indeed, little occasion for pause or hesitation, when a troublesome rhyme might be accommodated by an alteration of the stanza, or where an incorrect measure might be remedied by a variation of the rhyme.

"It was finally published in 1805, and may be regarded as the first work in which the writer, who has been since so voluminous, laid his claim to be considered as an original author."

During the year 1806, Sir Walter collected his original compositions in the ballad style into a small volume, which he published under the title of "*Ballads and Lyrical Pieces*." In 1803, he published his second poem of magnitude, "Marmion," in which, we are informed by himself, he took great pains, and was disposed to take still more, if the distresses of a friend had not "rendered it convenient at least, if not necessary, to hasten its publication. By good fortune," says Sir Walter, "the novelty of the subject, and, if I may say so, some force and vivacity of description, were allowed to atone for many imperfections. Thus, the second experiment was, in my case, decidedly successful."

Marmion had been published at the very commencement of the year 1808; within a few weeks thereafter appeared "The Works of John Dryden, in eighteen volumes, illustrated with Notes, Historical, Critical, and Explanatory, and a Life of the Author, by Walter Scott, Esq." In 1809, he assisted in editing "The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler," which appeared in two expensive volumes, in 4to.—In the same year, Sir Walter contributed like assistance to a new edition of lord Somers's invaluable collection of tracts, which appeared in twelve volumes, 4to. He also became a contributor to an Annual Register, on a more ambitious principle than any hitherto attempted—a work at first edited by Mr Southey.

Fortunately for all the lovers of poetry, the mountain-harp was not yet set aside amidst these more severe studies in prose, and in "The Lady of the Lake," Sir Walter Scott appeared to have produced the finest specimen of which his genius was capable. In 1811, appeared "Don Roderick," a dreamy vaticination of modern Spanish history; and in 1813, he published "Rokeby," in which he attempted, to invest English scenery and a tale of the civil war, with the charm which he had already thrown over the Scottish Highlands, and Borders, and their romantic inhabitants. Rokeby met with a decidedly unfavourable reception, which only excited him to a more strenuous effort; and, in 1814, he published "The Lord of the Isles." Even the name of Bruce, however, could not compensate the want of what had been the most captivating charm of his earlier productions—the development of new powers and styles of poesy. He afterwards published anonymously two smaller poems in succession, named "The Bridal of Triermain," and "Harold the Dauntless;" but they made a very slight impression upon the public.

From these instances of want of success, it now became evident to Sir Walter, that he must "change his hand," if he wished to continue in favour with the public. Waverley was, therefore, published in 1814; and, as the title-page was without the name of the author, the work was left to win its way in the world without any of the usual recommendations.

Its progress was for some time slow; but, after the first two or three months, its popularity increased in a degree which must have satisfied the expectations of the author, had these been far more sanguine than he ever entertained. To *Waverley* succeeded, in 1815, *Guy Mannering*; in 1816, the *Antiquary*, and the First Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*; in 1818, *Rob Roy*, and the Second Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*; and, in 1819, the Third Series of the *Tales of my Landlord*, containing the *Bride of Lammermoor* and a *Legend of Montrose*.

Having now drawn upon public curiosity to the extent of twelve volumes under two incognitos, he thought it necessary to adopt a third; and, accordingly, he intended *Ivanhoe*, which appeared in the beginning of 1820, to come forth as the first work of a new candidate for public favour; namely, *Lawrence Templeton*. From this design he was diverted by the publication of a novel at London, pretending to be a fourth series of the *Tales of my Landlord*. It was therefore judged necessary that *Ivanhoe* should appear as a veritable production of the author of *Waverley*. To it succeeded, in the course of the same year, the *Monastery* and the *Abbot*, which were reckoned the least meritorious of all his prose tales. In the beginning of the year 1821 appeared *Kenilworth*, making twelve volumes, if not written, at least published, in as many months. In 1822 he produced the *Pirate* and the *Fortunes of Nigel*; in 1823, *Peveril of the Peak* and *Quentin Durward*; in 1824, *St Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet*; in 1825, *Tales of the Crusaders*; in 1826, *Woodstock*; in 1827, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, first series; in 1828, *Chronicles of the Canongate*, second series; in 1829, *Anne of Geierstein*; and, in 1831, a fourth series of *Tales of my Landlord*, in four volumes, containing two tales, respectively entitled, *Count Robert of Paris*, and *Castle Dangerous*. The whole of these novels, except where otherwise specified, consisted of three volumes, and, with those formerly enumerated, make up the amount of his fictitious prose compositions to the enormous sum of seventy-four volumes.

Throughout the whole of his career, both as a poet and novelist, Sir Walter was in the habit of turning aside occasionally to less important avocations of a literary character. He was a contributor to the Edinburgh Review during the first few years of its existence, and to the Quarterly Review he was a considerable contributor, especially for the last five or six years of his life, during which, that excellent periodical was conducted by his son-in-law, Mr Lockhart. To the Supplement of the Sixth Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, he contributed the articles "Chivalry," "Romance," and the "Drama." In 1814, he edited "The Works of Swift," in 10 volumes, with a Life of the Author; a heavy work, but which, nevertheless, required a reprint some years afterwards. In 1814, Sir Walter gave his name and an elaborate introductory essay to a work, entitled "Border Antiquities," (two vols., 4to,) which consisted of engravings of the principal antique objects on both sides of the Border, accompanied by descriptive letter-press. In 1815, he made a tour through France and Belgium, visiting the scene of the recent victory over Napoleon. The result was a lively traveller's volume, under the title of "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk," and a poem styled "The Field of Waterloo." In the same year, he joined with Mr Robert Jameson and Mr Henry Weber, in composing a quarto on Icelandic Antiquities. In 1819, he published "An Account of the Regalia of Scotland," and undertook to furnish the letter-press to a second collection of engravings, under the title of "Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland." In 1822, Sir Walter published "Trivial Poems and Triolets, by P. Carey, with a Preface;" and, in 1822, appeared his dramatic poem of "Halidon Hill." In the succeeding year, he contributed a smaller dramatic poem, under the title of "Macduff's Cross," to a collection of Miss Joanna Baillie. The sum of his remaining poetical works may here be made up, by adding "The Doom of Devorgoil," and "The Auchin-drane Tragedy," which appeared in one volume in 1830. It cannot be said of any of these compositions, that they have made a deep impression upon the public. In consequence of these high literary achieve-

ments, his Majesty George IV. was pleased, in March, 1820, to create him a baronet of the United Kingdom, being the first to whom he had extended that honour after his accession to the crown.

In 1825, Mr Constable having projected a cheap series of original and selected works, engaged Sir Walter to compose a "Life of Bonaparte." This work was in progress, when, in January, 1826, Messrs Constable & Co., became bankrupt. For many years before, Sir Walter had been in the habit of drawing bills, at long dates, upon his publishers, as payment of the copy-right of his works; and, as he occasionally was obliged with their acceptances on the strength of works not yet written, he was in some measure compelled, by a sense of gratitude, to give his name to other obligations, which were incurred by the house, for the purpose of taking up the original engagements. Thus, although Sir Walter appeared to receive payment for his literary labours in a very prompt manner, he was pledging away his name all the while, for sums perhaps not much inferior in amount to those which he realized; so that, in the long run, he stood engaged to certain banks, in behalf of Messrs Constable & Co., for, it is said, about £60,000; in other words, a great portion of the earnings of his literary life.

The blow was endured with a magnanimity worthy of the greatest writer of the age. In the marriage contract of Sir Walter's eldest son, the estate of Abbotsford had been settled upon the young pair, and it was therefore beyond the reach of his creditors. By this legal arrangement, indeed, Sir Walter had hardly any property to present against the immense amount of his debts. There was one asset, however, which greatly surpassed the worldly goods of most debtors—his head. "Gentlemen," said he to the claimants using the Spanish proverb, "time and I against two. Let me take this good ally into company, and I believe I shall be able to pay you every farthing." He further proposed, in their behalf, to insure the sum of £22,000 upon his life. A trust deed was accordingly executed, in which he was considered a member of the printing firm of James Ballantyne & Co.; and it appeared that the whole debts, including what must

have been contracted commercially, amounted to £102,000, of which, however, the author of *Waverley* considered himself as personally responsible for by far the greater part. He then sat down, at fifty-five years of age, to the task of redeeming this enormous debt. In the first place, he sold his furniture and house in Edinburgh, and retreated into a humble lodging in a second-rate street. During the vacations, when residing at Abbotsford, he almost entirely gave up seeing company, a resolution the more easily carried into effect, as lady Scott was now dead. He was at this time labouring at his *Life of Napoleon*, which expanded under his hands to a bulk much beyond what was originally contemplated. In the autumn of 1826, he paid a visit to Paris, to acquaint himself with several local and historical details necessary for his work. On this occasion he was received in the kindest manner by the reigning monarch, the misguided Charles X. "*The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*" appeared in the summer of 1827, in nine vols. 8vo., and produced, it is understood, the sum of £12,000.

Till the failure of Messrs Constable and Co., the *Waverley* secret was kept inviolate; but the inquiry into the affairs of the house, rendered it no longer possible to conceal the nature of its connexion with Sir Walter Scott. The copyright of these works was announced for sale, and it was necessary for Sir Walter to reveal his secret in the best manner he could. Accordingly, at the annual dinner, 23d February, 1827, of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund, in answer to an allusion by his friend lord Meadowbank, he declared himself the author of all the *Waverley* novels—the sole and undivided author.

About the same time, the copyright of all his past novels was brought to the hammer, as part of the bankrupt stock of Messrs Constable & Co. It was bought by Mr Robert Cadell, of the late firm of Archibald Constable & Co., at £8,400, for the purpose of republishing the whole in a cheap uniform series of volumes, illustrated by notes and prefaces, and amended in many parts by the finishing touches of the author. Sir Walter or his creditors were to have half the profits, in consideration of his literary

aid. This was a most fortunate design. The new edition began to appear in June, 1829; and such was its adaptation to the public convenience, and the eagerness of all ranks of people to contribute towards the reconstruction of the author's fortunes, that the sale soon reached an average of twenty-three thousand copies, which is a greater sale than any previous publication had ever obtained.

In November, 1828, Sir Walter published the first part of a juvenile history of Scotland, under the title of "Tales of a Grandfather," being addressed to his grandchild, John Hugh Lockhart, whom he typified under the appellation of Hugh Littlejohn, Esq. In 1829, appeared the second, and, in 1830, the third and concluding series of this charming book. In 1830, he also contributed a graver history of Scotland, in two volumes, to the periodical work called "Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia." In the same year, appeared his Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, as a volume of Mr Murray's "Family Library." The profits of these various publications, but especially his share of the profits of the new edition of his novels, enabled him, towards the end of the year 1830, to pay a dividend of three shillings in the pound, which, but for the accumulation of interest, would have reduced his debts to nearly one-half. Of £54,000 which had now been paid, all except six or seven thousand had been produced by his own literary labours: a fact which fixes the revenue of his intellect for the last four or five years at nearly £10,000 a-year. Besides this sum, Sir Walter had also paid up the premium of the policy upon his life, which, as already mentioned, secured a *post obit* interest of £22,000 to his creditors.

During the succeeding winter, symptoms of paralysis, a disease hereditary in his family, began to be manifested, which became gradually more violent. In the following autumn, his physicians recommended a residence in Italy, as a means of delaying the approaches of his illness; and, by the kind offices of Capt. Basil Hall, permission was obtained for him to sail in his Majesty's ship, the *Barham*, which was then fitting out for Malta. He set sail from Portsmouth, on the 27th of October, and visited Malta, Naples, and Rome.

But feeling that his strength was rapidly decaying, he determined upon returning to his native country, in order that his bones might not be laid (to use the language of his own favourite minstrelsy) "far from the Tweed." His journey was performed too rapidly for his strength. For six days he travelled seventeen hours a-day. The consequence was, that, in passing down the Rhine, he experienced a severe attack of his malady, which produced complete insensibility, and would have inevitably carried him off, but for the presence of mind of his servant, who bled him profusely. On his arrival in London, he ordered his journey to be resumed; and, on Saturday, July 7th, 1832, he departed by sea to Scotland, reached Abbotsford, and seemed revived. The cloud, however, gradually descended upon him; he grew weaker and weaker—and, on the 21st of September, 1832, he died amidst his family, without any appearance of pain.

Of his moral character the following interesting sketch has been given by the pen of Mr Chambers:

"It is by far the greatest glory of Sir Walter Scott, that he shone equally as a good and virtuous man, as he did in his capacity of the first fictitious writer of the age. His behaviour through life was marked by undeviating integrity and purity, insomuch that no scandalous whisper was ever yet circulated against him. The traditionary recollection of his early life is burdened with no stain of any sort. His character as a husband and a father, is altogether irreproachable. Indeed, in no single relation of life does it appear that he ever incurred the least blame. His good sense, and good feeling united, appear to have guided him aright through all the difficulties and temptations of life; and, even as a politician, though blamed by many for his exclusive sympathy in the cause of established rule, he was always acknowledged to be too benevolent and too unobtrusive to call for severe censure. Along with the most perfect uprightness of conduct, he was characterized by extraordinary simplicity of manners. He was invariably gracious and kind, and it was impossible ever to detect in his conversation a symptom of his grounding the slightest title to consideration upon his literary fame, or of his even being conscious of it."

THE
L A Y
OF
THE LAST MINSTREL.
A Poem:
IN SIX CANTOS.

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners, which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral, and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes, highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author, than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the ancient metrical romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorizes the changes or rhythm in the text. The machinery also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem, which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is three nights and three days.

INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His withered cheek, and tresses gray,
Seemed to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, well-a-day ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead :
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest,
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne ;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door :
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a King had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
 Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower :
 The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
 No humbler resting place was nigh,
 With hesitating step, at last,
 The embattled portal-arch he passed,
 Whose ponderous grate, and massy bar,
 Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
 But never closed the iron door
 Against the desolate and poor.
 The Duchess* marked his weary pace,
 His timid mien, and reverend face,
 And bade her page the menials tell,
 That they should tend the old man well :
 For she had known adversity,
 Though born in such a high degree ;
 In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
 Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

When kindness had his wants supplied,
 And the old man was gratified,
 Began to rise his minstrel pride :
 And he began to talk anon,
 Of good Earl Francis†, dead and gone,
 And of Earl Walter‡, rest him God !
 A braver ne'er to battle rode :
 And how full many a tale he knew,
 Of the old warriors of Buccleuch ;
 And, would the noble Duchess deign
 To listen to an old man's strain,
 Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak
 He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
 That, if she loved the harp to hear,
 He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained ;
 The Aged Minstrel audience gained.

* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father to the duchess.

‡ Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather to the duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

But, when he reached the room of state,
 Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
 Perchance he wished his boon denied;
 For, when to tune his harp he tried,
 His trembling hand had lost the ease
 Which marks security to please;
 And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
 Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
 He tried to tune his harp in vain.
 The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
 And gave him heart, and gave him time,
 Till every string's according glee
 Was blended into harmony.
 And then, he said, he would full fain
 He could recall an ancient strain,
 He never thought to sing again.
 It was not framed for village churles,
 But for high dames and mighty earls;
 He had played it to King Charles the Good,
 When he kept court at Holyrood;
 And much he wished, yet feared, to try
 The long forgotten melody.

Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
 And an uncertain warbling made,
 And oft he shook his hoary head.
 But when he caught the measure wild,
 The old man raised his face, and smiled,
 And lightened up his faded eye,
 With all a poet's ecstasy!
 In varying cadence, soft or strong,
 He swept the sounding chords along:
 The present scene, the future lot,
 His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
 Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
 In the full tide of song were lost;
 Each blank, in faithless memory void,
 The poet's glowing thought supplied;
 And, while his harp responsive rung,
 'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,*
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower, that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loitered through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire.
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,

* In the reign of James I. Sir William Scott, of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Brankholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick: after which Branksome became the principal seat of the Buccleuch family, while security was any object in their choice of a mansion.

The extent of the ancient edifice can still be traced by some vestiges of its foundation, and its strength is obvious from the situation, on a deep bank surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, formed by a precipitous brook.

And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;*
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds from bower to stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest
With corslet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel, [barred.
And they drank the red wine through the helmet

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle bow;†
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

* The ancient barons of Buccleuch, retained in their household, at Branksome, a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief for the military service of watching and warding his castle. Satchells gives us the names of twenty-four gentlemen, younger brothers of ancient families, who were pensioners to the house of Buccleuch, and describes the lands which each possessed for his border service. In time of war with England, the garrison was doubtless augmented.

† The Jedwood axe was a sort of partizan or halbert, used by borsemen. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
 Why watch these warriors, armed, by night?
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying;
 They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
 To see St George's red cross streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming;
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
 From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.*

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall, —
 Many a valiant knight is here;
 But he, the Chieftain of them all,
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
 Beside his broken spear.
 Bards long shall tell,
 How lord Walter fell †
 When startled burghers fled, afar,
 The furies of the Border war;
 When the streets ‡ of high Dunedin †
 Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
 And heard the slogan's § deadly yell—
 Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
 Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
 Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
 —Can love of blessed charity?

* Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

† Sir Walter Scott, of Buccleuch, succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1192. He was a brave and powerful baron, and warden of the west marches of Scotland; and was slain by the Kerrs in the streets of Edinburgh, in 1552. This is the event alluded to in Stanza VII.; and the poem is supposed to open shortly after it had taken place.

‡ Edinburgh.

§ The war-cry, or gathering word, of a Border clan.

No! vainly to each holy shrine,
 In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;*
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
 While Cessford owns the rule of Car,†
 While Etrick boasts the line of Scott,
 The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
 The havoc of the feudal war,
 Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow, o'er lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear!
 Vengearce, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had locked the source of softer woe;
 And bunning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow;
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisped from the nurse's knee—
 "And, if I live to be a man,
 "My father's death revenged shall be!"
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
 All loose her golden hair,
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,
 And wept in wild despair.

* Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, there was a bond executed, in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. Such pactions were not uncommon in feudal times; but they were often, as in the present case, void of the desired effect.

† The family of Ker, Kerr, or Car, was very powerful on the Border. Fynes Morrison remarks, in his Travels, that their influence extended from the village of Preston Grange, in Lothian, to the limits of England. The Duke of Roxburge represents Ker of Cessford.

But not alone the bitter tear
 Had filial grief supplied ;
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
 Had lent their mingled tide :
 Nor in her mother's altered eye
 Dared she to look for sympathy.
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
 With Car in arms had stood,
 When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
 All purple with their blood.
 And well she knew, her mother dread,
 Before lord Cranstoun she should wed,*
 Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came ;
 Her father was a clerk of fame,
 Of Bethune's line of Picardie : †
 He learned the art, that none may name,
 In Padua, far beyond the sea. ‡
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame
 By feat of magic mystery ;
 For when, in studious mood, he paced
 St Andrew's cloistered hall,
 His form no darkening shadow traced
 Upon the sunny wall §

* The Cranstouns, Lord Cranstoun, are an ancient Border family, whose chief seat was at Crailing in Teviotdale. They were at this time at feud with the clan of Scott; for it appears that the Lady of Buccleuch, in 1557, beset the laird of Cranstoun, seeking his life. Nevertheless, the same Cranstoun, or perhaps his son, was married to a daughter of the same lady.

† The Bethunes were of French origin, and the name was accounted among the most noble in France. The family of Bethune, or Beaton, in Fife, produced three learned and dignified prelates; and from it was descended Dame Janet Beaton, Lady Buccleuch, widow of Sir Walter Scott of Branksome. She was a woman of masculine spirit, and possessed the hereditary abilities of her family in such a degree, that the superstition of the vulgar imputed them to supernatural knowledge.

‡ Padua was long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy.

§ The vulgar conceive, that when a class of students have made a certain progress in their mystic studies, they are obliged to run through a subterraneous hall, where the devil literally catches the hindmost in the race, unless he crosses the hall so speedily, that the arch enemy can only apprehend his shadow. Those, who have thus lost their shadow, always prove the best magicians.

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
 He taught that Ladye fair,
 Till to her bidding she could bow
 The viewless forms of air.*
 And now she sits in secret bower,
 In old Lord David's western tower,
 And listens to a heavy sound,
 That moans the mossy turrets round.
 Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
 That chafes against the scaur's† red side?
 Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
 Is it the echo from the rocks?
 What may it be, the heavy sound,
 That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
 The ban-dogs bay and howl;
 And, from the turrets round,
 Loud whoops the startled owl.
 In the hall, both squire and knight
 Swore that a storm was near,
 And looked forth to view the night;
 But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
 Chafing with the mountain's side,
 From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
 From the sullen echo of the rock,
 From the voice of the coming storm,
 The Ladye knew it well!
 It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
 And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

* The Scottish vulgar, believe in the existence of spirits residing in the air, or in the waters, to whose agency they ascribe floods, storms, and tempests. The introduction of the River and Mountain Spirits therefore accords with the general tone of the romance and the superstitions of the country where the scene is laid.

† *Scaur*, a precipitous bank of earth.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleepest thou, brother?"

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

———"Brother, nay—

On my hills the moon-beams play
 From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
 By every rill, in every glen,
 Merry elves their morrice pacing,
 To aërial minstrelsy,
 Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
 Trip it deft and merrily.
 Up, and mark their nimble feet!
 Up, and list their music sweet!"

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden
 Mix with my polluted stream;
 Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
 Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
 Tell me, thou, who viewest the stars,
 When shall cease these feudal jars?
 What shall be the maiden's fate?
 Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
 In utter darkness, round the pole;
 The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
 Orion's studded belt is dim;
 Twinkling faint, and distant far,
 Shimmers through mist each planet star;
 Ill may I read their high decree:
 But no kind influence deign they shower
 On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
 Till pride be quelled, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
 And the heavy sound was still;

It died on the river's breast,
 It died on the side of the hill.—
 But round Lord David's tower
 The sound still floated near;
 For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
 And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
 She raised her stately head,
 And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
 "Your mountains shall bend,
 And your streams ascend,
 Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
 Where many a bold retainer lay,
 And, with jocund din, among them all,
 Her son pursued his infant play.
 A fancied moss-trooper, the boy*
 The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
 And round the hall, right merrily,
 In mimic foray rode.
 Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
 Share in his frolic gambols bore,
 Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
 Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
 For the gray warriors prophesied,
 How the brave boy, in future war,
 Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
 Exalt the Crescents and the Star.†

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
 One moment, and no more;
 One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
 As she paused at the arched door:

* Moss-trooper was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Border; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides, and by none more actively and successfully than by Buccleuch's clan. Their predatory inroads were termed *forays*.

† The arms of the Kerrs of Cessford were, *Vert* on a chief-eron, betwixt three unicorns' heads erased *argent*. three mollets *sable*. Crest, an unicorn's head erased *proper*. The Scotts of Buccleuch bore, *Or* on a bend *azure*; a star of six points betwixt two crescents of the first.

Then, from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.*

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;†
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alke to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride:
Alike to him was tide, or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king and Scotland's queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me;
Say, that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

* The lands of Deloraine in Etrricke Forest, were immemorially possessed by the Buccleuch family, and were occasionally granted by them to vassals or kinsmen, for Border-service.

† The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. A sure way of stopping the dog was to cross a brook, or river, or to spit blood upon the track, which destroyed the discriminating fineness of his scent.

XXIII.

“What he gives thee, see thou keep;
 Stay not thou for food or sleep:
 Be it scroll, or be it book,
 Into it, knight, thou must not look;
 If thou readest, thou art lorn!
 Better had'st thou ne'er been born.”

XXIV.

“O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
 Ere break of day,” the warrior 'gan say,
 “Again will I be here:
 And safer by none may thy errand be done,
 Than, noble dame, by me;
 Letter nor line know I never a one,
 Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee.”*

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
 And soon the steep descent he past,
 Soon crossed the sounding barbican,†
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode;
 Green hazels o'er his basnet nod:
 He passed the Peel‡ of Goldiland,
 And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand;
 Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound.§
 Where Druid shades still fitted round;
 In Hawick twinkled many a light;
 Behind him soon they set in night;
 And soon he spurred his courser keen
 Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.||

* *Hairibee*, the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of the 51st psalm, *Miserere mei*, &c., anciently read by criminals, claiming the benefit of clergy.

† *Barbican*, the defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

‡ *Peel*, a Border tower.

§ This is a round artificial mound near Hawick, which, from its name (*Mod. Ang. Sax. Concilium, Conventus*), was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes.

|| The estate of Hazeldean, corruptly Hassendean, belonged formerly to a family of Scotts.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
 “Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark.”
 “For Branksome, ho!” the knight rejoined,
 And left the friendly tower behind.

He turned him now from Teviotside,
 And, guided by the tinkling rill,
 Northward the dark ascent did ride,
 And gained the moor at Horseliehill;
 Broad on the left before him lay,
 For many a mile, the Roman way.*

XXVII.

A moment now he slacked his speed,
 A moment breathed his panting steed;
 Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
 And loosened in the sheath his brand.
 On Minto-craggs the moon-beams glint,
 Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint;†
 Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
 Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
 For many a league his prey could spy;
 Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
 The terrors of the robber's horn;
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
 Ambition is no cure for love.

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence past Deloraine
 To ancient Riddell's fair domain,‡

* An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

† A romantic assemblage of cliffs, which rise suddenly above the vale of Teviot. A small platform, on a projecting crag, commanding a most beautiful prospect, is termed *Barnhill's Bed*. The Barnhill is said to have been a robber or outlaw. There are remains of a strong tower beneath the rocks, where he is supposed to have dwelt, and from which he derived his name.

‡ The family of Riddell have been very long in possession of the barony called Riddell, or Ryedale, part of which still bears the latter name. The epithet *ancient* is justified by the fact that their charters ascend to the reign of David I.

Where Aill, from mountains freed,
 Down from the lakes did raving come;
 Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
 Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
 In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,
 Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
 For he was barded* from counter to tail,
 And the rider was armed complete in mail;
 Never heavier man and horse
 Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
 The warrior's very plume, I say,
 Was daggled by the dashing spray;
 Yet, through good heart, and our Ladye's grace,
 At length he gained the landing place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
 And sternly shook his plumed head,
 As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;†
 For on his soul the slaughter-rod
 Of that unhallowed morn arose,
 When first the Scott and Car were foes;
 When royal James beheld the fray,
 Prize to the victor of the day;
 When Home and Douglas, in the van,
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
 Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
 And soon the hated heath was past;

* *Barded*, or barbed, applied to a horse accoutered with armour.

† Halidon, near Melrose, was an ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished. About a quarter of a mile to the northward lay the field of battle betwixt Buccleuch and Angus, (1526) which is called to this day the Skirmish field.

And far beneath, in lustre wan,
 Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :*
 Like some tall rock, with lichens gray,
 Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
 When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
 Now midnight lauds† were in Melrose sung.
 The sound upon the fitful gale,
 In solemn wise did rise and fail,
 Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
 Is wakened by the winds alone.
 But when Melrose he reached, 'twas silence all;
 He meetly stabled his steed in sfall,
 And sought the convent's lonely wall.

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
 The Master's fire and courage fell :
 Dejectedly, and low, he bowed,
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seemed to seek, in every eye,
 If they approved his minstrelsy;
 And, diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wandering long,
 Had done his hand and harp some wrong.

The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
 And every gentle ladye there,
 Each after each, in due degree,
 Gave praises to his melody;
 His hand was true, his voice was clear,
 And much they longed the rest to hear.
 Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
 After meet rest, again began.

* The monastery of Melrose, founded by King David I., is the finest specimen of Gothic architecture, and Gothic sculpture, which Scotland can boast. The stone of which it is built, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seen, as entire as when newly wrought. In some of the cloisters, there are representations of flowers, vegetables, &c., carved in stone, with accuracy and precision so delicate, that we almost distrust our senses, when we consider the difficulty of subjecting so hard a substance to such intricate and exquisite modulation.

† *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic church.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

IF thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
 Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
 For the gay beams of lightsome day
 Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
 When the broken arches are black in night,
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
 When the cold light's uncertain shower
 Streams on the ruined central tower;
 When buttress and buttress, alternately,
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
 When silver edges the imagery,
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;*
 When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
 And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
 Then go—but go alone the while—
 Then view St David's ruined pile:†
 And, home returning, soothly swear,
 Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
 Little recked he of the scene so fair.
 With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
 He struck full loud, and struck full long.
 The porter hurried to the gate—
 "Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
 "From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
 And strait the wicket opened wide:
 For Branksome's chiefs had in battle stood,
 To fence the rights of fair Melrose;

* The buttresses of the ruins of Melrose, are richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints, and labelled with scrolls, bearing appropriate texts of Scripture. Most of these statues have been demolished.

† David the first of Scotland, who was sainted for his liberality in founding and endowing Melrose, and other monasteries.

And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.*

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The arched cloisters, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride;
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,†
To hail the Monk of St Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide;—
"And, dar'st thou, warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring warrior, follow me!"

* The Buccleuch family were great benefactors to the abbey Melrose.

† *Aventayle*, visor of the helmet.



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If thou would'st view fair Melrose aught,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
Not the gay beams of lightsome day
Eld, but to hon, the ruins gray.

VI.

“Penance, father, will I none;
 Prayer know I hardly one;
 For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
 Save to patter an Ave Mary,
 When I ride on a Border foray: *
 Other prayer can I none;
 So speed me my errand, and let me begone.”

VII.

Again on the Knight looked the Churchman old,
 And again he sighed heavily;
 For he had himself been a warrior bold,
 And fought in Spain and Italy.
 And he thought on the days that were long since by,
 When his limbs were strong, and his courage was
 Now, slow and faint, he led the way, [high:—
 Where, cloistered round, the garden lay;
 The pillared arches were over their head,
 And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead. †

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
 Glistened with the dew of night;
 Nor herb, nor floweret, glistened there,
 But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
 The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon
 Then into the night he looked forth;
 And red and bright the streamers light
 Were dancing in the glowing north.
 So had he seen, in fair Castile,
 The youth in glittering squadrons start;
 Suddenly the flying jennet wheel,
 And hurl the unexpected dart. ‡

* The Borderers were very ignorant about religious matters, but however deficient in real religion, they regularly told their beads, and never with more zeal than when going on a plundering expedition.

† The cloisters were frequently used as places of sepulchre.

‡ The warlike pastime of throwing the *ferreed*, has prevailed in the east from time immemorial, and was imitated in the military game called *Juego de las canas*, which the Spaniards borrowed from their Moorish invaders.

He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars, lofty, and light, and small;
The key-stone, that locked each ribbed aisle.
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbells* were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner, riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne,†
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale‡
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone,§
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,

* *Corbells*, the projections from which these arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face, or mask.

† The famous and desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August, 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James Earl of Douglas. The Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose beneath the high altar.

‡ William Douglas, called the knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II.; and was so distinguished by his valour, that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. He was slain while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William Earl of Douglas, and was interred, with great pomp in Melrose abbey, where his tomb is still shown.

§ It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture, in its purity, than the eastern window of Melrose abbey. Sir James Hall, has traced the Gothic order

By foliated tracery combined;
 Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand,
 'Twixt poplars straight, the osier wand,
 In many a freakish knot, had twined;
 Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
 And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
 The silver light, so pale and faint,
 Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed;
 Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
 Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
 The moon-beam kissed the holy pane,
 And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,
 A Scottish monarch slept below;*
 Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
 "I was not always a man of woe;
 For Paynim countries I have trod,
 And fought beneath the Cross of God;
 Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
 And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

"In these far climes, it was my lot
 To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;†
 A wizard of such dreaded fame,
 That when, in Salamanca's cave,‡

through its various forms, and seemingly eccentric ornaments, to an architectural imitation of wicker-work; and this ingenious system is alluded to in the romance.

* A large marble stone, in the chancel of Melrose, is pointed out as the monument of Alexander II.

† Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century; but by a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later æra. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries, and he passed among his contemporaries for a skillful magician. Dempster informs us, that he remembers to have heard in his youth, that the magic books of Michael Scott were still in existence, but could not be opened without danger, on account of the fiends who were thereby invoked.

‡ Spain, from the reliques, doubtless, of Arabian learning and superstition, was accounted a favourite residence of magicians. There were public schools, where magic, or rather the sciences supposed to involve its mysteries, were regularly taught, at Toledo.

Him listed his magic wand to wave,
 The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
 Some of his skill he taught to me;
 And, Warrior, I could say to thee
 The words, that cleft Eildon hills in three,
 And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:*
 But to speak them were a deadly sin;
 And for having but thought them my heart within,
 A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

“When Michael lay on his dying bed,
 His conscience was awakened;
 He bethought him of his sinful deed,
 And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
 I was in Spain when the morning rose,
 But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
 The words may not again be said,
 That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
 They would rend this Abbaye’s massy nave,
 And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

“I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
 That never mortal might therein look;
 And never to tell where it was hid,
 Save at his chief of Branksome’s need;
 And when that need was past and o’er,
 Again the volume to restore.
 I buried him on St Michael’s night,
 When the bell tolled one, and the moon was bright
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,

Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city, they were held in a deep cavern; the mouth of which was walled up by Queen Isabella, wife of King Ferdinand.

* Michael Scott was much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso: it was accomplished in one night. Michael next ordered, that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into three picturesque peaks. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable dæmon, by employing him in making ropes out of sea-sand.

That his patron's Cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid;
Strange sounds along the chancel past,
The banners waved without a blast,"—
Still spoke the Monk, when the bell tolled one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead.
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."*
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign, with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,

* Baptista Porta, and other authors who treat of natural magic, talk much of eternal lamps, pretended to have been found burning in ancient sepulchres. One of these perpetual lamps is said to have been discovered in the tomb of Tulliola, the daughter of Cicero.

Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
 And through the galleries far aloof!
 No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
 It shone like heaven's own blessed light;
 And, issuing from the tomb,
 Showed the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
 Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
 And kissed his waving plume.

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
 As if he had not been dead a day.
 His hoary beard in silver rolled,
 He seemed some seventy winters old;
 A palmer's amice wrapped him round,
 With a wrought Spanish baldrick bound,
 Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
 His left hand held his Book of Might;
 A silver cross was in his right;
 The lamp was placed beside his knee:
 High and majestic was his look,
 At which the fellest fiends had shook,
 And all unruffled was his face:—
 They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
 Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
 And trampled down the warriors slain,
 And neither known remorse or awe;
 Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
 His breath came thick, his head swam round,
 When this strange scene of death he saw..
 Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
 And the priest prayed fervently, and loud:
 With eyes averted prayed he;
 He might not endure the sight to see,
 Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the Priest his death-prayer had prayed
 Thus unto Deloraine he said:—

“ Now speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou mayest not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!”
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frownæd;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night returned, in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
’Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as ’twas said to me.

XXIII.

“ Now, hie thee hence,” the Father said,
“ And, when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!”
The monk returned him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
 And strove his hardihood to find:
 He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray,
 Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
 For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
 Felt like a load upon his breast;
 And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
 Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
 Full fain was he when the dawn of day
 Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
 He joyed to see the cheerful light,
 And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

XXV.

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
 The sun had brightened the Carter's* side;
 And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale,
 And wakened every flower that blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain rose;
 And lovelier than the rose so red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale,
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
 And don her kirtle so hastilie;
 And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
 Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
 Why does she stop, and look often around,
 As she glides down the secret stair;
 And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
 As he rouses him up from his lair;
 And, though she passes the postern alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle-blown?

* A mountain on the Border of England, above Jedburgh.

XXVII.

The lady steps in doubt and dread,
 Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
 The lady caresses the rough blood-hound,
 Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
 The watchman's bugle is not blown,
 For he was her foster-father's son;
 And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
 To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
 And under the hawthorn's boughs are set
 A fairer pair were never seen
 To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
 He was stately, and young, and tall;
 Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
 And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
 Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
 When the half sigh her swelling breast
 Against the silken ribband pressed;
 When her blue eyes their secret told,
 Though shaded by her locks of gold—
 Where would you find the peerless fair,
 With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
 You listen to my minstrelsy;
 Your waving locks ye backward throw,
 And sidelong bend your necks of snow:—
 Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
 Of two true lovers in a dale;
 And how the Knight, with tender fire,
 To paint his faithful passion strove;
 Swore, he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never cease to love;
 And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
 And, half consenting, half denied,
 And said that she would die a maid:—
 Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,

Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:—
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarcely an earthly man,
If the tales were true, that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by raquet tossed,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismayed;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said.
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock;
And oft apart his arms he tossed,
And often muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlic,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:

And he of his service was full fain;
 For once he had been ta'en or slain,
 An' it had not been his ministry.
 All, between Home and Hermitage,
 Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
 And took with him this elvish Page,
 To Mary's chapel of the Lowes:
 For there, beside Our Lady's lake,
 An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.
 But the Lady of Branksome gathered a band
 Of the best that would ride at her command
 The trysting place was Newark Lee.
 Wat of Harden came thither amain,
 And thither came John of Thirlestaine,
 And thither came William of Deloraine;
 They were three hundred spears and three,
 Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
 Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
 They came to St Mary's lake ere day;
 But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
 They burned the chapel for very rage,
 And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.*

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good green wood,
 As under the aged oak he stood,
 The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
 As if a distant noise he hears.
 The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high.
 And signs to the lovers to part and fly;
 No time was then to vow or sigh.

* "Upou 25th June, 1557, Dame Janet Beatoune Lady Buccleuch. and a great number of the name of Scott, delaitit (accused) for coming to the kirk of St Mary of the Lowes, to the number of two hundred persons bodin in feir of weire (arranged in armour), and breaking open the doors of the said kirk, in order to apprehend the laird of Cranstoune for his destruction." *Abridgement of Booke of Adjournal in Advocates' Library*. It is said, that, upon this rising, the kirk of St Mary was burned by the Scots.

Fair Margaret, through the hazel grove,
 Flew like the startled cushat-dove :*
 The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
 Vaulted the knight on his steed amain,
 And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
 Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale,
 The Minstrel's voice began to fail :
 Full slyly smiled the observant page,
 And gave the withered hand of age
 A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
 The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
 He raised the silver cup on high,
 And, while the big drop filled his eye,
 Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
 And all who cheered a son of song.
 The attending maidens smiled to see,
 How long, how deep, how zealously,
 The precious juice the minstrel quaffed ;
 And he, emboldened by the draught,
 Looked gaily back to them, and laughed.
 The cordial nectar of the bowl
 Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul ;
 A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
 Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old ;
 And said I that my blood was cold,
 And that my kindly fire was fled,
 And my poor withered heart was dead,
 And that I might not sing of love?—
 How could I to the dearest theme,

* Wood pigeon.

That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
 So foul, so false, a recreant prove!
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
 In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen;
 In hamlets, dances on the green.
 Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
 And men below, and saints above;
 For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
 While, pondering deep the tender scene,
 He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
 But the Page shouted wild and shrill—
 And scarce his helmet could he don,
 When downward from the shady hill
 A stately knight came pricking on.
 That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
 Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;
 His armour red with many a stain:
 He seemed in such a weary plight,
 As if he had ridden the live-long night;
 For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
 When, dancing in the sunny beam,
 He marked the crane on the Baron's crest;*
 For his ready spear was in his rest.
 Few were the words, and stern and high,
 That marked the foemen's feudal hate;
 For question fierce, and proud reply,
 Gave signal soon of dire debate.

* The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic border motto. *Thou shalt want ere I want.*

Their very coursers seemed to know
 That each was other's mortal foe;
 And snorted fire, when wheeled around,
 To give each knight his vantage ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
 He sighed a sigh, and prayed a prayer:
 The prayer was to his patron saint,
 The sigh was to his ladye fair.
 Stout Deloraine nor sighed, nor prayed,
 Nor saint, nor ladye, called to aid;
 But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
 And spurred his steed to full career.
 The meeting of these champions proud
 Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
 The stately Baron backwards bent;
 Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
 Into a thousand flinders flew.
 But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
 Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
 Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
 Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
 Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
 Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
 Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
 Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
 The Baron onward passed his course;
 Nor knew—so giddy rolled his brain—
 His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII.

But when he reined his courser round,
 And saw his foeman on the ground
 Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
 He bade his page to staunch the wound,
 And there beside the warrior stay,

And tend him in his doubtful state,
 And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
 His noble mind was inly moved
 For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
 "This shalt thou do without delay;
 No longer here myseif may stay:
 Unless the swifter I speed away,
 Short shrift will be at my dying day."

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
 The Goblin-Page behind abode:
 His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
 Though small his pleasure to do good.
 As the corslet off he took,
 The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
 Much he marvelled, a knight of pride
 Like a book-bosomed priest should ride:*
 He thought not to search or staunch the wound,
 Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
 Resisted long the elfin grasp;
 For when the first he had undone,
 It closed as he the next begun.
 Those iron clasps, that iron band,
 Would not yield to unchristened hand,
 Till he smeared the cover o'er
 With the Borderer's curdled gore;
 A moment then the volume spread,
 And one short spell therein he read.
 It had much of glamour† might,
 Could make a ladye seem a knight;
 The cobwebs on a dungeon wall,
 Seem tapestry in lordly hall;

* There is a tradition, that friars were wont to come from Melrose, or Jedburgh, to baptize and marry in the parish of Unthank; and, from being in use to carry the mass-book in their bosoms, they were called *Book a-bosomes*.

† *Glamour*, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eye-sight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality.

A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
 A sheeling* seem a palace large,
 And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
 All was delusion, nought was truth.

X.

He had not read another spell,
 When on his cheek a buffet fell,
 So fierce, it stretched him on the plain,
 Beside the wounded Deloraine.
 From the ground he rose dismayed,
 And shook his huge and matted head;
 One word he muttered, and no more—
 "Man of age, thou smitest sore!"
 No more the Elfin Page durst try
 Into the wondrous Book to pry;
 The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,
 Shut faster than they were before.
 He hid it underneath his cloak.—
 Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
 I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
 It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he addressed,
 To do his master's high behest:
 He lifted up the living corse,
 And laid it on the weary horse;
 He led him into Branksome hall,
 Before the beards of the warders all;
 And each did after swear and say,
 There only passed a wain of hay.
 He took him to Lord David's tower,
 Even to the Lady's secret bower;
 And, but that stronger spells were spread,
 And the door might not be opened,
 He had laid him on her very bed.
 Whate'er he did of gramarye, †
 Was always done maliciously:

* A shepherd's hut.

† Magic.

He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood welled freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repassed the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seemed to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the draw-bridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and feil,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,*
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure wilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowled on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
And laughed, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wonderous change,
And frightened, as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lilye flower;

* It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance.

And when at length, with trembling pace,
 He sought to find where Branksome lay,
 He feared to see that grisly face
 Glare from some thicket on his way
 Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
 And deeper in the wood is gone,—
 For aye the more he sought his way,
 The farther still he went astray,—
 Until he heard the mountains round
 Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
 Comes nigher still, and nigher;
 Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
 His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
 And his red eye shot fire.
 Soon as the wildered child saw he,
 He flew at him right furiously.
 I ween you would have seen with joy
 The bearing of the gallant boy,
 When, worthy of his noble sire,
 His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
 He faced the blood-hound manfully,
 And held his little bat on high;
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
 But still in act to spring;
 When dashed an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stayed,
 He drew his tough bow-string;
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
 Ho! shoot not, Edward—'tis a boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
 And checked his fellow's surly mood,
 And quelled the ban-dog's ire:
 He was an English yeoman good,
 And born in Lancashire.

Well could he hit a fallow deer
 Five hundred feet him fro;
 With hand more true, and eye more clear,
 No archer bended bow.
 His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
 Set off his sun-burned face;
 Old England's sign, St George's cross,
 His barret-cap did grace;
 His bugle horn hung by his side,
 All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
 And his short faulchion, sharp and clear,
 Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
 Reached scanty to his knee;
 And, at his belt, of arrows keen
 A furbished sheaf bore he;
 His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
 No longer fence nad he;
 He never counted him a man,
 Would strike below the knee;
 His slackened bow was in his hand,
 And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.*

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
 But held him with his powerful arm,
 That he might neither fight nor flee;
 For when the Red-Cross spied he,
 The boy strove long and violently.
 "Now, by St George," the archer cries,
 "Edward, methinks we have a prize!
 This boy's fair face, and courage free,
 Shows he is come of high degree."

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
 For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
 And, if thou dost not set me free,

* This sketch of an English yeoman is imitated from Drayton's account of Robin Hood and his followers. To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg, was reckoned contrary to the law of arms.

False Suthron, thou shalt dearly rue!
 For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
 And William of Deloraine, good at need,
 And every Scott from Esk to Tweed;
 And, if thou dost not let me go,
 Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
 I'll have thee hanged to feed the crow!"

XX.

"Gramercy, for thy good will, fair boy!
 My mind was never set so high;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep in good order:
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou'lt make them work upon the Border
 Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
 I think our work is well begun,
 When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
 For so the Dwarf his part did play;
 And, in the shape of that young boy,
 He wrought the castle much annoy.
 The comrades of the young Buccleuch
 He pinched, and beat, and overthrew;
 Nay, some of them he well nigh slew.
 He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tie;
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
 He lighted the match of his bandelier,*
 And woefully scorched the hackbutteer.†
 It may hardly be thought, or said,
 The mischief that the urchin made,
 Till many of the castle guessed,
 That the young Baron was possessed.

* *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition.

† *Hackbutteer*, musketeer

LAST MINSTREL.

XXII.

Well I ween, the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispelled;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.

Much she wondered to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretched along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she staunch'd the blood;*
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.†
William of Deloraine in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted, as if she galled his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toiled; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So passed the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;

* See several charms for this purpose in Reginald Sect's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, p. 273.

† This idea is taken from Sir Kenelm Digby's account of his sympathetic powder, with which he cured all wounds by merely anointing with it the weapon that had inflicted them.

E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoyed and blessed the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and blessed
 The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
 Touched a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green;
 Her golden hair streamed free from band,
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
 For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
 That rises slowly to her ken,
 And, spreading broad its wavering light,
 Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
 Is yon red glare the western star?—
 O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
 Scarce could she draw her tightened breath;
 For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The warder viewed it blazing strong,
 And blew his war-note loud and long,
 Till, at the high and haughty sound,
 Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
 The blast alarmed the festal hall,
 And startled forth the warriors all;
 Far downward, in the castle-yard,
 Full many a torch and cresset glared;
 And helms and plumes, confusedly tossed,
 Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
 And spears in wild disorder shook,
 Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
 Was reddened by the torches' glare,
 Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
 And issued forth his mandates loud.—

“On Penchryst glows a bale* of fire,
 And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire;†
 Ride out, ride out,
 The foe to scout!
 Mount, mount for Branksome,‡ every man!
 Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
 That ever are true and stout.—
 Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
 For, when they see the blazing bale,
 Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
 Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life.
 And warn the warden of the strife.
 Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
 Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.”§

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
 Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
 While loud the harness rung,
 As to their seats with clamour dread,
 The ready horsemen sprung;
 And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
 And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
 And out! and out!
 In hasty route,
 The horsemen galloped forth;
 Dispersing to the south to scout,
 And east, and west, and north,
 To view their coming enemies,
 And warn their vassals, and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
 Awaked the need-fire's:|| slumbering brand,
 And ruddy blushed the heaven:

* *Bale*, beacon-faggot.

† See note on p. 45.

‡ *Mount for Branksome*, was the gathering word of the Scots.

§ On account of the clannish feelings of relationship that subsisted among the Borderers, a Border chief could muster a large force at a very short notice, whether for the purpose of surprise or rescue.

|| *Need-fire*, beacon.

For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
 Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
 All flaring and uneven,
 And soon a score of fires, I ween,
 From height, and hill, and cliff, were **seen**;
 Each with warlike tidings fraught;
 Each from each the signal caught;
 Each after each they glanced to sight,
 As stars arise upon the night.
 They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,*
 Haunted by the lonely earn;†
 On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
 Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;‡
 Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
 From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
 And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
 That all should bowne§ them for the **Border**.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
 The ceaseless sound of steel;
 The castle-bell, with backward clang,
 Sent forth the larum peal;
 Was frequent heard the heavy jar;
 Where massy stone and iron bar
 Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
 To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
 Was frequent heard the changing guard,
 And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
 While, wearied by the endless din,
 Blood-hound and ban-dog yelled within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
 Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil,
 And spoke of danger with a smile;

* *Tarn*, a mountain Lake. † *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.

‡ The cairns, or piles of loose stone, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, seem usually to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the centre, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed.

§ *Bowne*, make ready.

Cheered the young knights, and council sage
 Held with the chiefs of riper age.
 No tidings of the foe were brought,
 Nor of his numbers knew they ought,
 Nor in what time the truce he sought.

Some said, that there were thousands ten,
 And others weened that it was nought
 But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
 Who came to gather in black mail;*
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,

Might drive them lightly back agen.
 So passed the anxious night away,
 And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening throng
 Applaud the Master of the Song;
 And marvel much, in helpless age,
 So hard should be his pilgrimage.
 Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
 His wandering toil to share and cheer;
 No son, to be his father's stay,
 And guide him on the rugged way?—
 "Aye! once he had—but he was dead!"
 Upon the harp he stooped his head,
 And busied himself the strings withal,
 To hide the tear, that fain would fall.
 In solemn measure, soft and slow,
 Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale-fires† blaze no more;

* Protection-money exacted by free-booters.

† The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh.—The act of parliament 1455, c. 48, directs that one bale or faggot shall be warning of the approach of the English in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed*; four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.

No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willowed shore
 Where'er thou wind'st by dale or hill,
 All, all is peaceful, all is still,
 As if thy waves, since Time was born,
 Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
 Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
 Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
 Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
 Retains each grief, retains each crime,
 Its earliest course was doomed to know,
 And, darker as it downward bears,
 Is stained with past and present tears.
 Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
 It still reflects to memory's eye
 The hour, my brave, my only boy,
 Fell by the side of great Dundee.*
 Why, when the volleying musket played
 Against the bloody Highland blade,
 Why was not I beside him laid!—
 Enough—he died the death of fame;
 Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border dale and fell,
 Full wide and far was terror spread;
 For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
 The peasant left his lowly shed.†
 The frightened flocks and herds were pent
 Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
 And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
 While ready warriors seized the spear.
 From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
 Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,

* The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killycranke.

† The Morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsmen, on the approach of an English army. Caves, hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat.

Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.*

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
“Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddle-side,†
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,
That drove him from his Liddle tower;
And, by my faith,” the gate-ward said,
“I think ’twill prove a Warden-Raid.”‡

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,§
Could bound like any Bilhope stag;||
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf¶ was all their train:
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-browed,
Of silver broach and bracelet proud,**
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.

* The mutual cruelties of the Borderers, and the personal hatred of the Wardens gave to the Border wars, between England and Scotland, a character of savage atrocity which could not be paralleled even in the wars of the sixteenth century.

† Watt Tinlinn was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was, by profession, a *sutor* (shoemaker), but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior.

‡ An inroad commanded by the Warden in person.

§ The broken ground in a bog.

|| Bilhope was famous among hunters for bucks and roes.

¶ Bonds-man.

** The Borderers, on account of being exposed to having their houses burned or plundered, were anxious to display splendour in decorating and ornamenting their females.

He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely formed, and lean withal :
 A battered morion on his brow ;
 A leathern jack, as fence enow,
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung ;
 A border-axe behrind was slung ;
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
 Seemed newly dyed with gore ;
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
 His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
 The tidings of the English foe :—
 “ Belted Will Howard is marching here,*
 And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
 And all the German hagbut-men,†
 Who have long lain at Askertain :
 They crossed the Liddle at curfew hour,
 And burned my little lonely tower ;
 The tiend receive their souls therefor !
 It had not been burned this year and more.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight ;
 But I was chased the live-long night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came,
 Until I turned at Priestthaugh-Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,

* Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, duke of Norfolk. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches; and from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions. The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre or Ptolemais, under Richard Cœur de Lion. The lord Dacre of this period, was a man of hot and obstinate character, as appears from some particulars of Lord Surrey's letter to Henry VIII. giving an account of his behaviour at the siege and storm of Jedburgh.

† In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinky there were in the English army six hundred backbutters, or *musketeers* on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners. From the battle-pieces of the ancient Flemish painters, we learn that the Low-Country and German soldiers marched to an assault with their right knees bared.

Selw Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite :
He drove my cows last Eastern's night.*

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirmed the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen.—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.

VIII.

From fair St Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleuch's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave*
Arrayed beneath a banner bright,
The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims
To wreath his shield, since royal James,
Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne :
Hence his high motto shines revealed,—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged knight, to danger steelod,
With many a moss-trooper, came on:

* When James had assembled his nobility at Fala, to invade England, and was disappointed by their refusal, Sir John Set of Thirlestane alone declared himself ready to follow the king wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleurs-de-luce, similar to the treasure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest; motto, *Ready, aye ready*.

And azure in a golden field,
 The stars and crescent graced his shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.*
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
 And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
 High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
 His wood-embosomed mansion stood;
 In the dark glen, so deep below,
 'The herds of plundered England low;
 His bold retainers' daily food,
 And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
 Marauding chief! his sole delight
 The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
 Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
 In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
 And still, in age, he spurned at rest,
 And still his brows the helmet pressed,
 Albeit the blanched locks below
 Where white as Dinlay's spotless snow:
 Five stately warriors drew the sword
 Before their father's band;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Whitsladè the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
 And warriors more than I may name;
 From Yarrow-cleuch to Hindhaugh-swair,
 From Woodhouseslie to Chester-glen,
 Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear;
 Their gathering word was Bellenden.†
 And better hearts o'er Border sod
 To siege or rescue never rode.

* Walter Scott of Harden, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary, was a renowned Border freebooter, whose castle was situate upon the very brink of a dark and precipitous dell, through which a scanty rivulet steers to meet the Borthwick. In the recess of this glen he is said to have kept his spoil, which served for the daily maintenance of his retainers, until the production of a pair of clean spurs in a covered dish, announced to the hungry band, that they must ride for a supply of provisions. He was married to Mary Scott, called in song the Flower of Yarrow.

† Ballenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word.

The Ladye marked the aids come in,
 And high her heart of pride arose;
 She bade her youthful son attend,
 That he might know his father's friend,
 And learn to face his foes.
 "The boy is ripe to look on war;
 I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
 And his true arrow struck afar
 The raven's nest upon the cliff;
 The Red Cross, on a southern breast,
 Is broader than the raven's nest:
 Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to
 And o'er him hold his father's shield." [wield,

XI.

Well may you think, the wily Page
 Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
 He counterfeited childish fear,
 And shrieked, and shed full many a tear,
 And moaned and plained in manner wild.
 The attendants to the Ladye told,
 Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
 That wont to be so free and bold.
 Then wrathful was the noble dame;
 She blushed blood-red for very shame:—
 "Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
 Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
 Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
 To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
 Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
 That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

XII.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
 To guide the counterfeited lad.
 Soon as his palfrey felt the weight
 Of that ill-omen'd elvish freight,
 He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
 Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
 It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
 To drive him but a Scottish mile;
 But, as a shallow brook they crossed,

The elf, amid the running stream,
 His figure changed, like form in dream,
 And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
 But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
 Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
 And pierced his shoulder through and through.
 Although the imp might not be slain,
 And though the wound soon healed again,
 Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;
 And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
 Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XIII.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
 That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
 And martial murmurs, from below,
 Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
 Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
 Were Border-pipes and bugles blown;
 The coursers' neighing he could ken,
 And measured tread of marching men;
 While broke at times the solemn hum,
 The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
 And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
 Above the copse appear;
 And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
 Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XIV.

Light forayers first, to view the ground,
 Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round
 Behind, in close array and fast,
 The Kendal archers, all in green,
 Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood are seen.
 To back and guard the archer band,
 Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand;
 A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
 With kirtles white, and crosses red,
 Arrayed beneath the banner tall,
 That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall:

And minstrels, as they marched in order, [der."
 Played, " Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Bor-

XV.

Behind the English bill and bow,
 The mercenaries, firm and slow,
 Moved on to fight, in dark array,
 By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
 Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
 And sold their blood for foreign pay.
 The camp their home, their law the sword,
 They knew no country, owned no lord :*
 They were not armed like England's sons,
 But bore the levin-darting guns ;
 Buff-coats, all frounced and 'broidered o'er,
 And morsing-horns † and scarfs they wore ;
 Each better knee was bared, to aid
 The warriors in the escalade ;
 All, as they marched, in rugged tongue,
 Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XVI.

But louder still the clamour grew,
 And louder still the minstrels blew,
 When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
 Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry ;
 His men at arms, with glaive and spear,
 Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
 There many a youthful knight, full keen
 To gain his spurs, in arms was seen ;
 With favour in his crest, or glove,
 Memorial of his ladye-love.
 So rode they forth in fair array,
 Till full their lengthened lines display ;
 Then called a halt, and made a stand,
 And cried, " St George, for merry England !"

* Such were the mercenary soldiers who figure in the middle ages under the names of Brabaugons, Condottierri, and Frac-Compagnions who farmed their services to the best bidders, and proclaimed themselves "the friends of God, and enemies of all the world."

† Powder flasks.

XVII.

Now every English eye, intent,
 On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
 So near they were, that they might know
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
 On battlement and bartizan
 Gleamed axe, and spear, and partizan;
 Falcon and culver,* on each tower,
 Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
 And flashing armour frequent broke
 From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
 Where, upon tower and turret head,
 The seething pitch and molten lead
 Reeked, like a witch's cauldron red.
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
 The wicket opes, and from the wall
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XVIII.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;
 Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;
 Forced him, with chastened fire, to prance,
 And, high curvetting, slow advance:
 In sign of truce, his better hand
 Displayed a peeled willow wand;
 His squire, attending in the rear,
 Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.†
 When they espied him riding out,
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
 Sped to the front of their array,
 To hear what this old knight should say.

XIX.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
 Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,

* Ancient pieces of artillery.

† A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting.

Why, 'gainst the truce of Border-tide,
 In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
 With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
 And all your mercenary band,
 Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
 My Ladye reads you swith return;
 And, if but one poor straw you burn,
 Or do our towers so much molest,
 As scare one swallow from her nest,
 St Mary! but we'll light a brand,
 Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

XX.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
 But calmer Howard took the word:—
 "May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
 To seek the castle's outward wall;
 Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show,
 Both why we came, and when we go."
 The message sped, the noble Dame
 To the walls' outward circle came;
 Each chief around leaned on his spear,
 To see the pursuivant appear.
 All in Lord Howard's livery dressed,
 The lion argent decked his breast;
 He led a boy of blooming hue—
 O sight to meet a mother's view!
 It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
 Obeisance meet the herald made,
 And thus his master's will he said.

XXI.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
 'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords:
 But yet they may not tamely see,
 All through the western wardenry,
 Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
 And burn and spoil the Border-side;
 And ill beseems your rank and birth
 To make your towers a flemens-firth.*

* An aridum for outlaws.

We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
 That he may suffer march-treason pain:*
 It was but last St Cuthbert's even
 He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
 Harried† the lands of Richard Musgrave,
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
 Then, since a lone and widowed Dame
 These restless riders may not tame,
 Either receive within thy towers
 Two hundred of my master's powers,
 Or straight they sound their warison,‡
 And storm and spoil thy garrison;
 And this fair boy, to London led,
 Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXII.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
 And stretched his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
 A moment changed that Lady's cheer,
 Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear;
 She gazed upon the leaders round,
 And dark and sad each warrior frowned;
 Then, deep within her sobbing breast
 She locked the struggling sigh to rest;
 Unaltered and collected stood,
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood.

XXIII.

"Say to your Lords of high emprise,
 Who war on woman and on boys,
 That either William of Deloraine
 Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,§

* Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was called march-treason. Among others, was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce.

† Plundered.

‡ Note of assault.

§ In dubious cases, the innocence of Border-criminals was occasionally referred to their own oath.

Or else he will the combat take
 Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good,
 But William may count with him kin and blood
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
 When English blood swelled Ancram ford;*
 And but that Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably in the flight,
 Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine;
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
 Here while I live, no foe finds room.

Then, if thy lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake† dirge,
 Our mout, the grave where they shall lie."

XXIV.

Proud she looked round, applause to claim—
 Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame;
 His bugle Watt of Harden blew;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
 The English war-cry answered wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear;
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bow-string to his ear:
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;
 But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
 A horseman galloped from the rear.

* The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry. The battle of Ancram Moor, or Peniel-heuch, which was fought A. D. 1515, was considered sufficient probation for that honour. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley.

† *Lyke-wake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment.

XXV.

" Ah! noble Lords!" he, breathless, said,
 " What treason has your march betrayed?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before yon walls, around you war?
 Your foemen triumph in the thought,
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw:*
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
 And on the Liddle's northern strand,
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,
 Beneath the eagle and the rood;
 And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
 Have to proud Angus come;
 And all the Merse and Lauderdale
 Have risen with haughty Home.
 An exile from Northumberland,
 In Liddesdale I've wandered long;
 But still my heart was with merry England,
 And cannot brook my country's wrong,
 And hard I've spurred all night, to show
 The mustering of the coming foe."

XXVI.

" And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
 " For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
 That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
 And waved in gales of Galilee,
 From Branksome's highest towers displayed,
 Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
 Level each harquebuss on row;
 Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
 Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
 Dacre for England, win or die!"

XXVII.

" Yet hear," quoth Howard, " calmly hear,
 Nor deem my words the words of fear:

* *Wapen-schaw*, the military array of a county.

For who in field or foray slack
 Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?*

But thus to risque our Border power
 In strife against a kingdom's power,
 Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
 Certes, were desperate policy.
 Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
 Ere conscious of the advancing aid :
 Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine†
 In single fight ; and if he gain,
 He gains for us ; but if he's crossed,
 'Tis but a single warrior lost :
 The rest, retreating as they came,
 Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXVIII.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother-warden's sage rebuke ;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 And slow and sullenly obeyed :
 But ne'er again the Border side
 Did these two lords in friendship ride ;
 And this slight discontent, men say,
 Cost blood upon another day.

XXIX.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
 Before the castle took his stand ;
 His trumpet called, with parleying strain,
 The leaders of the Scottish band ;
 And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
 Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
 A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
 And thus the terms of fight he said :—
 " If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
 Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,
 Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's lord,
 Shall hostage for his clan remain :

* This was the cognisance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches. The crest, or bearing, of a warrior, was often used as a *nomme de guerre*.

† Trial by single combat, so peculiar to the feudal system, was common on the Borders.

If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
 The boy his liberty shall have.
 Howe'er it falls, the English band,
 Unharming Scots, by Scots unharmed,
 In peaceful march like men unarmed,
 Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXX.

Unconscious of the near relief,
 The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
 Though much the Ladye sage gainsayed :
 For though their hearts were brave and true,
 From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
 How tardy was the regent's aid ;
 And you may guess the noble Dame
 Durst not the secret prescience own,
 Sprung from the art she might not name,
 By which the coming help was known.
 Closed was the compact, and agreed
 That lists should be enclosed with speed
 Beneath the castle on a lawn :
 They fixed the morrow for the strife,
 On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
 At the fourth hour from peep of dawn ;
 When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
 Or else a champion in his stead,
 Should for himself and chieftain stand,
 Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXI.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
 Full many minstrels sing and say,
 Such combat should be made on horse,
 On foaming steed, in full career,
 With brand to aid, when as the spear
 Should shiver in the course :
 But he, the jovial Harper, taught*
 Me, yet a youth, how it was fought
 In guise which now I say :

* The person, here alluded to, is one of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling Roaring Willie, Willie, chanced to

He knew each ordinance and clause
 Of black Lord Archibald's battle laws,
 In the old Douglas' day.
 He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
 Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue :
 For this when they the goblet plied,
 And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
 The bard of Reull he slew.
 On Teviot's side, in fight, they stood,
 And tuneful hands were stained with blood ;
 Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
 Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXII.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
 That dragged my master to his tomb ;
 How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
 Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
 And wrung their hands for love of him,
 Who died at Jedwood Air ?
 He died !—his scholars, one by one,
 To the cold silent grave are gone ;
 And I, alas ! survive alone,
 To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
 And grieve that I shall hear no more
 The strains, with envy heard before ;
 For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
 My jealousy of song is dead.

HE paused :—the listening dames again
 Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain ;
 With many a word of kindly cheer,—
 In pity half, and half sincere,—
 Marvelled the Duchess how so well
 His legendary song could tell—

quarrel with one of his own profession, distinguished by the odd name of Sweet Milk, from a place on Rule water so called. They retired to decide the contest with their swords, and Sweet Milk was killed on the spot; in consequence of which Willie was taken and executed at Jedburgh, bequeathing his name to the beautiful Scotch air, called "Rattling Roaring Willie."

Of ancient deeds, so long forgot ;
 Of feuds, whose memory was not ;
 Of forests, now laid waste and bare ;
 Of towers, which harbour now the hare ;
 Of manners, long since changed and gone ;
 Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
 So long had slept, that fickle Fame
 Had blotted from her rolls their name,
 And twined round some new minion's head
 The fading wreath for which they bled ;—
 In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
 Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased ; for ne'er
 Was flattery lost on poet's ear :
 A simple race ! they waste their toil
 For the vain tribute of a smile ;
 E'en when in age their flame expires,
 Her dulcet breath can fan its fires :
 Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
 And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.
 Smiled then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
 And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain :—they do not err,
 Who say, that, when the Poet dies,
 Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
 And celebrates his obsequies ;
 Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
 For the departed bard make moan ;
 That mountains weep in crystal rill ;
 That flowers in tears of balm distil ;
 Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
 And oaks, in deeper groan, reply ;

And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn ;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle minstrel's bier :
The phantom knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the fields he heaped with dead ;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain :
The chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die :
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill ;
All mourn the minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers ;
Thick clouds of dust afar appeared,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard ;
Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun ;
And feudal banners fair displayed
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

'Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
 From the fair Middle Marches came;
 The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,*
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
 'Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
 Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburn†
 Their men in battle-order set;
 And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
 That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
 Of Clarence's Plantagenet.‡
 Nor lists, I say, what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
 And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
 Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
 And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
 Down the steep mountain glittering far,
 And shouting still, "a Home! a Home!"§

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
 On many a courteous message went;
 To every chief and lord they paid
 Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
 And told them,—how a truce was made,
 And how a day of fight was ta'en
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
 And how the Lady prayed them dear,

* The bloody heart was the well-known cognisance of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of Good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the holy Land.

† Sir David Home of Wedderburn, slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne.

‡ At the battle of Bouge in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton, of Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet.

§ The Earls of Home, were descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family was, "a Home! a Home!" The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Ho-

That all would stay the fight to see,
 And deign, in love and courtesy,
 To taste of Branksome cheer.
 Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
 Were England's noble Lords forgot ;
 Himself, the hoary Seneschal,
 Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
 Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
 Accepted Howard, than whom knight
 Was never dubbed, more bold in fight ;
 Nor, when from war and armour free,
 More famed for stately courtesy :
 But angry Dacre rather chose
 In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
 How these two hostile armies met ?
 Deeming it were no easy task
 To keep the truce which here was set ;
 Where martial spirits, all on fire,
 Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
 By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
 By habit, and by nation, foes,
 They met on Teviot's strand :
 They met, and sate them mingled down,
 Without a threat, without a frown,
 As brothers meet in foreign land :
 The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
 Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
 Were interchanged in greeting dear ;
 Visors were raised, and faces shown,
 And many a friend, to friend made known,
 Partook of social cheer.
 Some drove the jolly bowl about ;
 With dice and draughts some chased the day ;
 And some, with many a merry shout,
 In riot revelry, and rout,
 Pursued the foot-ball play.*

* The foot-ball was anciently a very favourite sport all through
 Scotland, but especially on the Borders.

VII.

Yet be it known, had bugles blown,
 Or sign of war been seen ;
 Those bands, so fair together ranged,
 Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
 Had dyed with gore the green :
 The merry shout by Teviot-side
 Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
 And in the groan of death ;
 And whingers,* now in friendship bare,
 The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
 Was not unfrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day ; †
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
 Decayed not with the dying day ;
 Soon through the latticed windows tall,
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone ;
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and beakers' clang ;
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watch-word of their clan ;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

* A sort of knife, or poniard.

† Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, the inhabitants on either side appear to have regarded each other like the outposts of hostile armies, and often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in the middle of hostilities, so that the governments of both countries were jealous of their berishing too intimate a connexion.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamours died ;
 And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide ;
 Save, when the changing sentinel
 The challenge of his watch could tell ;
 And save, where, through the dark profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound
 Rung from the nether lawn ;
 For many a busy hand toiled there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare,
 Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye,
 Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh :
 For many a noble warrior strove
 To win the flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
 With throbbing head and anxious heart,
 All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay :
 By times, from silken couch she rose ;
 While yet the bannered hosts repose,
 She viewed the dawning day :
 Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
 First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
 Which in the tower's tall shadow lay ;
 Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
 Had rung the live-long yesterday ;
 Now still as death ;—till, stalking slow,—
 The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
 A stately warrior passed below ;
 But when he raised his plumed head—
 Blessed Mary ! can it be ?—

Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
 He walks through Branksome's hostile towers
 With fearless step and free.
 She dare not sign, she dare not speak—
 Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
 His blood the price must pay!
 Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
 Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
 Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small—for well
 You may bethink you of the spell
 Of that sly urchin Page;
 This to his lord he did impart
 And made him seem, by glamour art,
 A knight from Hermitage.
 Unchallenged, thus, the warder's post,
 The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
 For all the vassalage:
 But, O! what magic's quaint disguise
 Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
 She started from her seat;
 While with surprise and fear she strove,
 And both could scarcely master love—
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
 That foul malicious urchin had
 To bring this meeting round;
 For happy love's a heavenly sight,
 And by a vile malignant sprite
 In such no joy is found:
 And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
 Their erring passion might have wrought
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
 And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
 And to the gentle Ladye bright,
 Disgrace, and loss of fame.
 But earthly spirit could not tell
 The heart of them that loved so well;

True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven.

It is not Fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die:

It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blast the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettricke wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And banded many a word of boast,
About the knight each favoured most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestaine:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
In armour sheathed from top to toe,
Appeared, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Lady's silken rein

Did noble Howard hold;
 Unarmed by her side he walked,
 And much, in courteous phrase, they talked
 Of feats of arms of old.
 Costly his garb, his Flemish ruff
 Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
 With satin slashed, and lined;
 Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
 His cloak was all of Poland fur,
 His hose with silver twined;
 His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
 Hung in a broad and studded belt;
 Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
 Called noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose foot-cloth swept the ground;
 White was her wimple, and her veil,
 And her loose locks a chaplet pale
 Of whitest roses bound;
 The lordly Angus, by her side,
 In courtesy to cheer her tried;
 Without his aid, her hand in vain
 Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
 He deemed, she shuddered at the sight
 Of warriors met for mortal fight;
 But cause of terror, all unguessed,
 Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
 When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
 The Dame and she the barriers graded.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch
 An English knight led forth to view;
 Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
 So much he longed to see the fight.
 Within the lists, in knightly pride,
 High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
 Their leading staffs of steel they wield
 As marshals of the mortal field:

While to each knight their care assigned
 Like vantage of the sun and wind.
 Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
 In king and queen, and wardens' name,
 That none, while lasts the strife,
 Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
 Aid to a champion to afford,
 On peril of his life;
 And not a breath the silence broke,
 Till thus the alternate heralds spoke:

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
 Good knight and true, and freely born,
 Amends from Deloraine to crave,
 For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
 He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
 Is traitor false by Border laws;
 This with his sword he will maintain,
 So help him God, and his good cause!

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

Here standeth William of Deloraine,
 Good knight and true, of noble strain,
 Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
 Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat;
 And that, so help him God above,
 He will on Musgrave's body prove,
 He lyes most foully in his throat.

LORD DACRE.

Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
 Sound trumpets!—

LORD HOME.

———“God defend the right!”—

Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
 Let loose the martial foes,
 And in mid list, with shield poised high,
 And measured step and wary eye,
 The combatants did close.

XXI.

'Til would it suit your gentie ear,
 Ye lovely listeners, to hear
 How to the axe the helms did sound,
 And blood poured down from many a wound;
 For desperate was the strife, and long,
 And either warrior fierce and strong.
 But, were each dame a listening knight,
 I well could tell how warriors fight;
 For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
 Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
 Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
 And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
 To yield a step for death or life.

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
 Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
 He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
 Thence never shalt thou rise again!
 He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
 Undo the visor's barred band,
 Untix the gorget's iron clasp,
 And give him room for life to gasp!—
 O, bootless aid!—haste holy Friar,
 Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
 Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
 And smooth his path from earth to heaven.

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped;—
 His naked foot was dyed with red,
 As through the lists he ran;
 Unmindful of the shouts on high,
 That hailed the conqueror's victory,
 He raised the dying man;
 Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
 As o'er him he kneeled down in prayer;
 And still the crucifix on high
 He holds before his darkening eye;
 And still he bends an anxious ear,
 His faltering penitence to hear;

Still props him from the bloody sod,
 Still, even when soul and body part,
 Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
 And bids him trust in God!
 Unheard he prays;—the death pang's o'er!—
 Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
 Or inusing o'er the piteous sight,
 The silent victor stands;
 His beaver did he not unclasp,
 Marked not the shouts, felt not the grasp
 Of gratulating hands.
 When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
 Mingled with seeming terror, rise
 Among the Scottish bands;
 And all, amid the thronged array,
 In panic haste gave open way
 To a half-naked ghastly man,
 Who downward from the castle ran:
 He crossed the barriers at a bound,
 And wild and haggard looked around,
 As dizzy, and in pain;
 And all, upon the armed ground,
 Knew William of Deloraine!
 Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
 Vaulted each marshall from his steed;
 "And who art thou," they cried,
 "Who hast this battle fought and won?"
 His plumed helm was soon undone—
 "Cranstoun of Teviotside!
 For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
 And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kissed,
 And often pressed him to her breast;
 For, under all her dauntless show,
 Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
 Yet not Lord Cranstoun deigned she greet,
 Though low he kneeled at her feet.—

Me lists not tell what words were made,
 What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
 —For Howard was a generous foe—
 And how the clan united prayed,
 The Ladye would the feud forego,
 And deign to bless the nuptial hour
 Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She looked to river, looked to hill,
 Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
 Then broke her silence stern and still,—
 “Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
 Their influence kindly stars may shower
 On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
 For pride is quelled, and love is free.”
 She took fair Margaret by the hand,
 Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand
 That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she.
 “As I am true to thee and thine,
 Do thou be true to me and mine!
 This clasp of love our bond shall be;
 For this is your betrothing day,
 And all these noble lords shall stay,
 To grace it with their company.”

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
 Much of the story she did gain:
 How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
 And of his Page, and of the Book,
 Which from the wounded knight he took;
 And how he sought her castle high,
 That morn, by help of gramarye;
 How, in Sir William's armour dight,
 Stolen by his Page, while slept the knight,
 He took on him the single fight.
 But half his tale he left unsaid,
 And lingered till he joined the maid.—
 Cared not the Ladye to betray
 Her mystic arte in view of day;

But well she thought; ere midnight came,
 Of that strange Page the pride to tame,
 From his foul hands the Book to save,
 And send it back to Michael's grave.—
 Needs not to tell each tender word
 'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
 Nor how she told of former woes,
 And how her bosom fell and rose,
 While he and Musgrave bandied blows—
 Needs not these lovers' joys to tell;
 One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
 Had wakened from his deathlike trance;
 And taught that, in the listed plain,
 Another, in his arms and shield,
 Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
 Under the name of Deloraine.
 Hence, to the field, unarmed, he ran,
 And hence his presence scared the clan,
 Who held him for some fleeting wraith,*
 And not a man of blood and breath.
 Not much this new ally he loved,
 Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
 He greeted him right heartilie:
 He would not waken old debate,
 For he was void of rancorous hate,
 Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
 In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
 Unless when men at arms withstood,
 Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
 He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
 Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
 And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he looked down;
 Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made.

* The spectral apparition of a living person.

XXIX.

" Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here !
 I ween, my deadly enemy ;
 For if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slewest a sister's son to me ;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
 Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive, as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us, did die :
 Yet, rest thee God ! for well I know,
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is, Snaffle, spur, and spear,*
 Thou wert the best to follow gear.
 'Twas pleasure, as we looked behind,
 To see how thou the chace couldst wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray !†
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."

XXX.

So mourned he, till Lord Dacre's band
 Were bowning back to Cumberland.
 They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
 And laid him on his bloody shield ;
 On levelled lances, four and four,
 By turns, the noble burden bore :
 Before, at times, upon the gale,
 Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail ;
 Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
 Sung requiem for the warrior's soul :

* The lands, that over Ouse to Berwick forth do bear,
 Have for their blazon had, the snaffle, spur, and spear.

Polly-abion, Song xxxiii

† The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trod*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed.

Around, the horsemen slowly rode ;
With trailing pike: the spearmen trod ;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale, to Leven's shore ;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong ;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear ;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep ;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem loads the gale ;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he who touched the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous southern land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp. was dear,
Liked not to hear it ranked so high
Above his flowing poesy ;
Less liked he still that scornful jeer
Misprized the land, he loved so dear ;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned.
 As home his footsteps he hath turned,
 From wandering on a foreign strand!
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well.
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim.
 Despite those titles, power, and self,
 The wretch, concentered all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprang,
 Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band,
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now, and what hath been,
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams were left,
 And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.
 By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
 Though none should guide my feeble way;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettricke break,
 Although it chill my withered cheek;
 Still lay my head by Teviot stono,
 Though there, forgotten and alone.
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorned like me ! to Branksome Hall
 e Minstrels came, at festive call ;
 rooping they came, from near and far,
 he jovial priests of mirth and war ;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
 The splendour of a spousal rite,
How mustered in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight ;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furred with miniver ;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs, and ringing chapelets, sound :
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek ;
That lovely hue, which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise !

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh ;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these :—I trust right well,
She wrought not by forbidden spell ;*

* Popular belief, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers or wizards ; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league with, those enemies of mankind.

For mighty words and signs have power
 O'er sprites in planetary hour:
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.
 But this for faithful truth I say:
 The Ladye by the altar stood,
 Of sable velvet her array,
 And on her head a crimson hood,
 With pearls embroidered and entwined,
 Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
 A merlin sat upon her wrist,
 Held by a leash of silken twist.*

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
 'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
 And in the lofty arched hall
 Was spread the gorgeous festival.
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
 Marshalled the rank of every guest;
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,
 The mighty meal to carve and share:
 O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
 And princely peacock's gilded train,
 And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
 And cygnet from St Mary's wave;†
 O'er ptarmigan and venison,
 The priest had spoke his benison.
 Then rose the riot and the din,
 Above, beneath, without, within!
 For from the lofty balcony,
 Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery;

* A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was usually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, by a knight or baron.

† The peacock was considered, during chivalrous times, a dish of peculiar solemnity. It was introduced on days of grand festival, and was the signal for the adventurous knights to vow some perilous deed "before the peacock and the ladies." The boar's head was also a dish of feudal splendour. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colours of the baron at whose board it was served. St Mary's Lake, at the head of the river Yarrow, is often the resort of flights of wild swans.

Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
 Loudly they spoke, and loudly laughed;
 Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
 To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
 The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
 The clamour joined with whistling scream,
 And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
 In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
 From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
 And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy;
 Till Conrad, lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humour highly crossed,
 About some steeds his band had lost,
 High words to words succeeding still,
 Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,
 Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.*
 He took it on the Page's saye,
 Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
 Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
 The kindling discord to compose:
 Stern Rutherford right little said,
 But bit his glove, and shook his head.—†
 A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
 Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
 His bosom gored with many a wound,
 Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
 Unknown the manner of his death,
 Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;

* The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border lairds. Dickon Draw-the-Sword was son to the old warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill.

† To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems to have been considered, upon the Border, as a pledge of mortal revenge.

But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The Dwarf, who feared his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revelled as merrily and well
As those, that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;*
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foamed forth, in floods, the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one,
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.†

IX.

The wily Page, with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tulin's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought,
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;

* The person bearing this redoubtable *nomme de guerre*, was an Elliot, and resided at Thorleshope, in Liddesdale. He occurs in the list of Border riders, in 1597.

† The old Scottish tradition is, that the founder of the Buccleuch family was a Galwegian exile, who ran down and secured a buck, which had thrown out Kenneth Macalpine and all his nobles in the chase.

From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer,
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flaggons overturned;
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest further fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the land Debateable;
Well friended too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves, that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.
Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.
Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;

Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lee,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;—
So perish all, would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
Pray for their souls, who died for love,*
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song.
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.*

* Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, the most accomplished cavalier of his time, was beheaded on Towerhill in 1546; a victim to the

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
 And oft, within some olive grove,
 When evening came, with twinkling star,
 They sung of Surrey's absent love.
 His step the Italian peasant staid,
 And deemed, that spirits from on high,
 Round where some hermit saint was laid,
 Were breathing heavenly melody;
 So sweet did harp and voice combine
 To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may sa
 The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
 When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
 Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
 Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
 His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
 He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
 Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
 And, faithful to his patron's name,
 With Howard still Fitztraver came;
 Lord William's foremost favourite he,
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas All-soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
 He heard the midnight-bell with anxious start,
 Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
 When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
 To show to him the ladye of his heart,
 Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
 Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,

mean jealousy of Henry VIII. It is said that in his travels, Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclined upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper.

That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought
of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might,
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright :
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light, by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror, huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam ;
And forms upon its breast the earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream ;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in
gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind !
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined ;
All in her night-robe loose, she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine
Some strain, that seemed her inmost soul to find :—
That favoured strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Ladye Geraldine.

XX.

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy rolled the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.

Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine,
 The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song:
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith.—
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St Clair;
 St Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that Lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcaes;
 Where erst St Clairs held princely sway,
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—*
 Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odinn rode her wave;
 And watched, the whilst, with visage pale
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful,
 In these rude isles, might Fancy cull;

* The St Clairs are of Norman extraction, who, settling in Scotland during the reign of Malcolm Ceanmore, obtained large grants of land in Mid-Lothian.—These domains were increased by the liberality of succeeding monarchs, to the descendants of the family, and comprehended the baronies of Rosline, Pentland, Cowsland, Cardaine, and several others. In 1379 the chief of the family was created Earl of Orkney in right of his mother the daughter of the last Earl, by Haco King of Norway, which title was recognised by the Kings of Scotland and remained with his successors until it was annexed to the Crown, in 1471, by act of parliament. The castle of Kirkwall was built by the St Clairs, and in exchange for the earldom of Orkney the castle and domains of Ravensraig, or Ravensheuch, were conferred on William Saintclair, Earl of Caithness.

For thither came, in times afar,
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
 The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
 Skilled to prepare the raven's food;
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.*
 And there, in many a stormy vale,
 The Scald had told his wondrous tale;
 And many a Runic column high
 Had witnessed grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold, in his youth,
 Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,
 Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
 Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell;†
 Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
 Their faulchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms!‡
 With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learned a milder minstrelsy;
 Yet something of the Northern spell
 Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
 No haughty feat of arms I tell:

* The chiefs of the *Vikings* or Scandinavian pirates, assumed the title of *Sækonungr*, or Sea-kings. Ships, in the inflated language of the Scalds, are often termed the serpents of the ocean.

† The *Jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the old northern mythology. The dread Maids were the *Valkyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhala, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader, as Gray's Fatal Sisters.

‡ The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures. The ghosts of these warriors were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt

Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.*

—“ Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay !
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,†
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“ The blackening wave is edged with white ;
To inch‡ and rock the sea-mews fly ;
The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

“ Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay ;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch :
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day !”

“ ’Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my Ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“ ’Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If ’tis not filled by Rosabelle.”

XXIV.

O’er Roslin all that dreary night
A wonderous blaze was seen to gleam ;
’Twas broader than the watch-fire light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
’Twas seen from Dryden’s groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

such adventures ; for they held nothing more worthy of their valour than to encounter supernatural beings.

* This was a family name in the house of St Clair. Henry St Clair, the second of the line, married Rosabelle, fourth daughter of the Earl of Strathern.

† A large and strong castle, now ruinous, situated betwixt Kirkaldy and Dysart, on a steep crag, washed by the Firth of Forth.

‡ Inch, *Isle*.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud,
 Where Roslin's chiefs unconfined lie;
 Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.*

Seemed all on fire within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
 So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
 The lordly line of high St Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
 Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold—
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St Clair was buried there,
 With candle, with book, and with knell;
 But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
 Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
 Though, long before the sinking day,
 A wonderous shade involved them all:
 It was not eddying mist or fog,
 Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
 Of no eclipse had sages told;
 And yet, as it came on apace,
 Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
 Could scarce his own stretched hand, behold.
 A secret horror checked the feast,
 And chilled the soul of every guest;

* The beautiful chapel of Roslin is still in tolerable preservation. It was founded in 1446 by William St Clair, Prince of Orkney, &c. &c., who built the castle of Roslin, where he resided in princely splendour. The chapel is said to appear on fire-precipitous to the death of any of his descendants. The Barons of Roslin were buried in armour in a vault beneath the chapel floor.

Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast ;
The elvish Page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, " Found ! found ! found ! "

XXVI.

Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came ;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame ;
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall ;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone ;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish Page it broke.

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,
From sea to sea the larum rung ;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish Dwarf was seen no more !

XXVII.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all ;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, " GYLBIN, COME ! "
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the Page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look :
But none of all the astonished trait
Was so dismayed as De'loraine ;
His blood did freeze, his brain did ~~burn~~,
'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return ;

For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him, of whom the story ran,
 Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.*
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldrick bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea ;
 And knew—but how it mattered not—
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVIII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling, heard the wonderous tale ;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke ;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St Bryde of Douglas make,†
 That he a pilgrimage would take
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some blessed saint his prayers addressed—
 Some to St Modan made their vows,
 Some to St Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
 Some to our Lady of the Isle ;
 Each did his patron witness make,
 That he such pilgrimage would take.
 And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.
 While vows were ta'en, and prayers were prayed,
 'Tis said the noble Dame, dismayed,
 Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

* Called in the Manx language the *Mauthe Doog*. The story is, that a fool-hardy person who would question this phar tom, received such a shock from the interview, that he remained speechless till his death, which happened only three days after.

† This was a favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus, in particular.

XXIX.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
 Which after in short space befell ;
 Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
 Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoune's heir ;
 After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
 To wake the note of mirth again ;
 More meet it were to mark the day
 Of penitence and prayer divine,
 When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
 Sought Melrose holy shrine.

XXX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
 And arms enfolded on his breast,
 Did every pilgrim go ;
 The standers-by might hear uneth,
 Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
 Through all the lengthened row :
 No lordly look, no martial stride,
 Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
 Forgotten their renown ;
 Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
 To the high altar's hallowed side,
 And there they kneeled them down ;
 Above the suppliant chieftains wave
 The banners of departed brave ;
 Beneath the lettered stones were laid
 The ashes of their fathers dead ;
 From many a garnished niche around,
 Stern saints, and tortured martyrs, frowned.

XXXI.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came ;
 Paper, and host, and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourished fair
 With the Redeemer's name ;

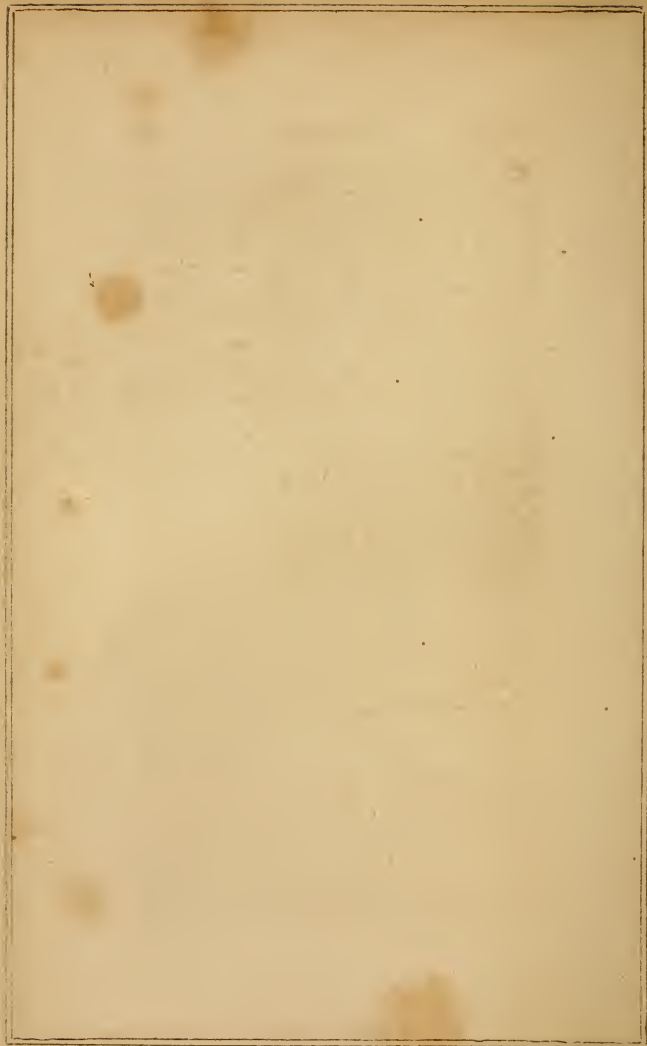
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
 The mitred Abbot stretched his hand,
 And blessed them as they kneeled;
 With holy cross he signed them all,
 And prayed they might be sage in hall,
 And fortunate in field.
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
 And solemn requiem for the dead;
 And bells tolled out their mighty peal
 For the departed spirit's weal;
 And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burthen of the song,—
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
 While the pealing organ rung;
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
 Thus the holy Fathers sung.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away,
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?
 When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll;
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the dead;
 O! on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from clay,
 Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

HUSHED is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
 And did he wander forth alone?
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage?
 No—close beneath proud Newark's tower,
 Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower:

A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmly breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark-heath;
When throstles sung in Hare-head shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.



MARMION,
▲
TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

A Poem;

IN SIX CANTOS

ALAS! THAT SCOTTISH MAID SHOULD SING
THE COMBAT WHERE HER LOVER FELL!
HAT SCOTTISH BARD SHOULD WAKE THE STRING
THE TRIUMPH OF OUR FOES TO TELL!—LEYDAN

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY, LORD MONTAGUE

Esq. &c. &c.

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public has honoured with some degree of applause should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present Story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any historical narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 4th September, 1513

M A R M I O N.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

To WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq.

Ashetiel, Ettrick Focht.

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear :
Late, gazing down the steepy limn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled green-wood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through :
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed ;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam ;
Away hath passed the heather-bell,
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell ;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yare.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sun-beam shines :
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,

And far beneath their summer hill,
 Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
 The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
 And wraps him closer from the cold;
 His dogs no merry circles wheel,
 But, shivering, follow at his heel;
 A cowering glance they often cast,
 As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
 As best befits the mountain child,
 Feel the sad influence of the hour,
 And wail the daisy's vanished flower;
 Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
 And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
 And birds and lambs again be gay,
 And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
 Again shall paint your summer bower;
 Again the hawthorn shall supply
 The garlands you delight to tie;
 The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
 The wild birds carol to the round,
 And while you frolic light as they,
 Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
 New life revolving summer brings;
 The genial call dead Nature hears,
 And in her glory re-appears.
 But O! my country's wintry state
 What second spring shall renovate?
 What powerful call shall bid arise
 The buried warlike, and the wise;
 The mind, that thought for Britain's wool,
 The hand, that grasped the victor steel?
 The vernal sun new life bestows
 Even on the meanest flower that blows;
 But vainly, vainly, may he shine,
 Where Glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine;
 And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
 That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
 O never let those names depart !
 Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
 Who victor died on Gadite wave ;
 To him, as to the burning levin,
 Short, bright, resistless course was given ;
 Where'er his country's foes were found,
 Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
 Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
 Relied, blazed, destroyed,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth,
 Who bade the conquerer go forth,
 And launched that thunderbolt of war
 On Egypt, Hafnia,* Trafalgar ;
 Who, born to guide such high emprise,
 For Britain's weal was early wise ;
 Alas ! to whom the Almighty gave,
 For Britain's sins, an early grave ;
 His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
 A bauble held the pride of power,
 Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
 And served his Albion for herself ;
 Who, when the frantic crowd amain
 Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
 O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
 The pride, he would not crush, restrained,
 Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause, [laws.
 And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
 A watchman on the lonely tower,
 Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
 When fraud or danger were at hand ;
 By thee, as by the beacon-light,
 Our pilots had kept course aright ;
 As some proud column, though alone,
 Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne.
 Now is the stately column broke,
 The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
 The trumpet's silver sound is still
 The warder silent on the hill !

* Copenhagen.

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
 When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
 With Palinure's unaltered mood,
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood
 Each call for needful rest repelled,
 With dying hand the rudder held,
 Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way!
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
 But still, upon the hallowed day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
 Because his Rival slumbers nigh;
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,
 When best employed, and wanted most;
 Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
 And wit that loved to play, not wound;
 And all the reasoning powers divine,
 To penetrate, resolve, combine;
 And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
 They sleep with him who sleeps below;
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
 From error him who owns this grave,
 Be every harsher thought suppressed,
 And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
 Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
 Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
 The distant notes of holy song,
 As if some angel spoke agen,
 All peace on earth, good-will to men;
 If ever from an English heart,
 O *here* let prejudice depart,

And partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that FOX a Briton died !
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colours to the mast.
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave,
A portion in this honoured grave ;
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd !
Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place ;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar ;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these.
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
For ever tombed beneath the stone,
Where,--taming thought to human pride!--
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier ;
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry,—
" Here let their discord with them die ;
" Speak not for those a separate doom,
" Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb,

"But search the land of living men,
"Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse:
Then, O how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmarked from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The bard you deigned to praise, your deathless names
has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wildered fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood,
That throbs through bard in bard-like mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow—
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy.—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frost-work in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle are gone,
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copse-wood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:

Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
 And waste the solitary day,
 In plucking from yon fen the reed,
 And watching it float down the Tweed;
 Or idly list the shrilling lay
 With which the milk-maid cheers her way,
 Marking its cadence rise and fall,
 As from the field, beneath her pail,
 She trips it down the uneven dale:
 Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
 The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,
 Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
 Lest his old legends tire the ear
 Of one, who, in his simple mind,
 May boast of book-learned taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
 (For few have read romance so well)
 How still the legendary lay
 O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
 How on the ancient minstrel strain
 Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
 And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
 By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
 Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
 As when the Champion of the Lake
 Enters Morgana's fated house,
 Or in the Chapel Perilous,
 Despising spells and demons' force,
 Holds converse with the unburied corse;
 Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
 (Alas! that lawless was their love)
 He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
 And freed full sixty knights; or when,
 A sinful man, and unconfessed,
 He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
 And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
 He might not view with waking eye.*

The mightiest chiefs of British song
 Scorned not such legends to prolong:

* These allusions refer to the adventures of Sir Launcelot of the Lake so agreeably told in the old romance of the Morte Arthur.

They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
 And mix in Milton's heavenly theme ;
 And Dryden, in immortal strain,
 Had raised the Table Round again,*
 But that a ribald king and court
 Bade him toil on, to make them sport ;
 Demanded for their niggard pay,
 'Tis for their souls, a looser lay,
 Licentious satire, song, and play ;
 The world defrauded of the high design, [lofty line,
 Profaned the God-given strength, and marred the

Warmed by such names, well may we then,
 Though dwindled sons of little men,
 Essay to break a feeble lance
 In the fair fields of old romance ;
 Or seek the moated castle's cell,
 Where long through talisman and spell,
 While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
 Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept :
 There sound the harpings of the North,
 Till he awake and sally forth,
 On venturous quest to prick again,
 In all his arms, with all his train,
 Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
 Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
 And wizard with his wand of might,
 And errant maid on palfrey white.
 Around the Genius weave their spells,
 Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells,
 Mystery, half veiled and half revealed ;
 And Honour, with his spotless shield ;
 Attention, with fixed eye ; and Fear,
 That loves the tale she shrinks to hear ;
 And gentle Courtesy ; and Faith,
 Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death ;

* Dryden had projected an epic poem, the subject of which was to have been the exploits of king Arthur ; and had been enabled to accomplish such a work, it would have been undoubtedly a glorious monument of English genius, as well as record of English heroism. But the ingratitude of Charles II., and his courtiers, by whom he was abandoned to poverty and neglect, obliged him to labour for his present wants, and the scheme was unfortunately abandoned.

And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won;
Ytene's* oaks—beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,†
And that Red King,‡ who, while of old
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renewed such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foiled in fight
The Necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love:
Hear then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

The Castle.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,§
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the Donjon Keep,||
The loop-hole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.

* The new forest in Hampshire, anciently so called.

† Ascapart was a huge giant, and Bevis of Southampton a gallant knight, who both figure in the early English romances.

‡ William Rufus.

§ The ruinous castle of Norham, is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shows it to have been a place of magnificence, as well as strength.

|| The *donjon*, was the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually

The warriors on the turrets high,
 Moving athwart the evening sky,
 Seemed forms of giant height :
 Their armour, as it caught the rays,
 Flashed back again the western blaze,
 In lines of dazzling light.

II

St George's banner, broad and gay,
 Now faded, as the fading ray
 Less bright, and less, was flung ;
 The evening gale had scarce the power
 To wave it on the Donjon tower,
 So heavily it hung.
 The scouts had parted on their search,
 The castle gates were barr'd ;
 Above the gloomy portal arch,
 Timing his footsteps to a march,
 The warder kept his guard,
 Low humming, as he paced along,
 Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
 He looks abroad, and soon appears,
 O'er Horncliff-hill, a plump* of spears,
 Beneath a pennon gay ;
 A horseman, darting from the crowd,
 Like lightning from a summer cloud,
 Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array.
 Beneath the sable palisade,
 That closed the castle barricade,
 His bugle-horn he blew ;
 The warder hasted from the wall,
 And warned the Captain in the hall,
 For well the blast he knew :

detached. It contained the great hall, and principal rooms of state for solemn occasions, and also the prison of the fortress : from which last circumstance we derive the modern and restricted use of the word *duncheon*.

* This word properly applies to a flight of waterfowl, but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse.

There is a Knight of the North Country,
 Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears.

Modden Field.



Lay set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweeds fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviots mountains lone

And joyfully that Knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

“ Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow ;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot :

Lord Marmion waits below.”—
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarred,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparred,
And let the draw-bridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trod,
His helm hung at the saddle-bow ;
Well, by his visage, you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been ;
The scar on his brown cheek revealed
A token true of Bosworth field ;
His eye-brow dark, and eye of fire,
Showed spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek,
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick moustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age ;
His square-turned joints, and strength of limb,
Showed him no carpet knight so trim,
But, in close fight, a champion grim,
In camps, a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he armed from head to heel,
 In mail, and plate, of Milan steel ;*
 But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
 Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd ;
 Amid the plumage of the crest,
 A falcon hovered on her nest,
 With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
 E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
 Soared sable in an azure field :
 The golden legend bore aright,
 " WHO CHECKS AT ME, TO DEATH IS DIGHT."
 Blue was the charger's broidered rein ;
 Blue ribbons decked his arching mane ;
 The knightly housing's ample fold
 Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
 Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
 They burned the gilded spurs to claim ;
 For well could each a war-horse tame,
 Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
 And lightly bear the ring away ;
 Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
 Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
 And frame love ditties passing rare,
 And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
 With halbard, bill, and battle-axe :
 They bore Lord Marnion's lance so strong,
 And led his sumpter mules along,
 And ambling palfrey, when at need
 Him listed ease his battle-steed.
 The last, and trustiest of the four,
 On high his forky pennon bore ;
 Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
 Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,

* The artists of Milan were famous in the middle ages for their skill in armour.

Where, blazoned sable, as before,
 The towering falcon seemed to soar.
 Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
 In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
 With falcons broider'd on each breast,
 Attended on their lord's behest.
 Each, chosen for an archer good,
 Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
 Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
 And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
 Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
 And at their belts their quivers rung.
 Their dusty palfreys, and array,
 Showed they had marched a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
 How fairly armed, and ordered how,
 The soldiers of the guard,
 With musquet, pike, and morion,
 O welcome noble Marmion,
 Stood in the castle-yard;
 Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
 The gunner held his linstock yare,
 For welcome-shot prepared:
 Entered the train, and such a clang,
 As then through all his turrets rang,
 Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
 The trumpets flourished brave,
 The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
 And thundering welcome gave.
 A blythe salute, in martial sort,
 The minstrels well might sound,
 For, as Lord Marmion crossed the court,
 He scattered angels round.
 "Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
 Stout heart, and open hand!
 Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
 Thou flower of English land!"—

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabards deck,
 With silver scutcheon round their neck,
 Stood on the steps of stone,
 By which you reach the Donjon gate,
 And there, with herald pomp and state,
 They hailed Lord Marmion :
 They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scivelbaye,
 Of Tamworth tower and town ;*
 And he, their courtesy to requite,
 Gave them a chain of twelve marks weight,
 All as he lighted down.
 " Now largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion, †
 Knight of the crest of gold !
 A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
 Ne'er guarded heart so bold."—

XII.

They marshall'd him to the castle-hall,
 Where the guests stood all aside,
 And loudly flourished the trumpet-call,
 And the heralds loudly cried,
 —" Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
 With the crest and helm of gold !
 Full well we know the trophies won
 In the lists at Cottiswold :
 There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
 'Gainst Marmion's force to stand ;
 To him he lost his ladye-love,
 And to the king his land.

* In earlier times, the family of Marmion, lords of Fon'enay, in Normandy, was highly distinguished. Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, a distinguished follower of the Conqueror, obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scivelby, in Lincolnshire, by the honourable service of being the royal champion, as the ancestors of Marmion had formerly been to the Dukes of Normandy. The family became extinct, and the office of royal champion was adjudged to Sir John Dynoke, to whom the manor of Scivelby had descended by one of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion.

† This was the cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights. The heralds, like the minstrels, were a race allowed to have great claims upon the liberality of the knights, of whose feats they kept a record, and proclaimed them aloud, as in the text, upon suitable occasions.

Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair ;
 We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare ;
 We saw the victor win the crest,
 He wears with worthy pride ;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight !
 Room, room, ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquered in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye !"—

XIII.

Then stepped to meet that noble lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place—
 They feasted full and high :
 The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
 " *How the fierce Thirwall's, and Ridleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hard-riding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deulman's-shaw.*"
 Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay ;
 Yet much he praised the pains he took,
 And well those pains did pay :
 For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
 By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

" Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
 " Of your fair courtesy.
 I pray you bide some little space,
 In this poor tower with me.

Here may you keep your arms from rust,
 May breathe your war-horse well ;
 Seldom hath pass'd a week, but giust
 Or feat of arms befell :
 The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
 And love to couch a spear ;—
 St George ! a stirring life they lead
 That have such neighbours near.
 Then stay with us a little space,
 Our northern wars to learn ;
 I pray you for your lady's grace."
 Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his altered look,
 And gave a squire the sign ;
 A mighty wassel bowl he took,
 And crown'd it high with wine.
 " Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion :
 But first I pray thee fair,
 Where hast thou left that Page of thine,
 That used to serve thy cup of wine,
 Whose beauty was so rare ?
 When last in Raby towers we met,
 The boy I closely eyed,
 And often marked his cheeks were wet,
 With tears he fain would hide :
 His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
 To burnish shield, or sharpen brand,
 Or saddle battle-steed ;
 But meeter seemed for lady fair,
 To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
 Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
 The slender silk to lead :
 His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
 His bosom—when he sigh'd,
 The russet doublet's rugged fold
 Could scarce repel its pride !
 Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
 To serve in lady's bower ?
 Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
 A gentle paramour ?"—

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
 He rolled his kindling eye,
 With pain his rising wrath suppressed,
 Yet made a calm reply :
 · That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
 He might not brook the northern air.
 More of his fate if thou would'st learn,
 I left him sick in Lindisfarn :
 Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
 Why does thy lovely lady gay
 Disdain to grace the hall to-day ?
 Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
 Gone on some pious pilgrimage ?"—
 He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
 Whispered light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmarked, at least unrecked, the taunt,
 Careless the Knight replied,
 " No bird, whose feathers gayly flaunt,
 Delights in cage to bide :
 Norham is grim, and grated close,
 Hemmed in by battlement and fosse,
 And many a darksome tower ;
 And better loves my lady bright,
 To sit in liberty and light,
 In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
 We hold our greyhound in our hand,
 Our falcon on our glove ;
 But where shall we find leash or band,
 For dame that loves to rove ?
 Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
 She'll stoop when she has tired her wing."

XVIII.

" Nay, if with Royal James's bride
 The lovely Lady Heron bide,
 Behold me here a messenger,
 Your tender greetings prompt to bear :
 For, to the Scottish court addressed,
 I journey at our king's behest,

And pray you, of your grace, provide
 For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
 I have not ridden in Scotland since
 James backed the cause of that mock prince,
 Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
 Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
 Then did I march with Surrey's power,
 What time we razed old Ayton tower."*—

XIX.

"For such like need, my lord, I trow,
 Norham can find you guides enow; †
 For here be some have pricked as far
 On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
 Have drunk the monks of St Boinan's ale,
 And driven the beeves of Lauderaale;
 Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
 And given them light to set their hoods."—‡

XX.

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
 "Were I in warlike-wise to ride,
 A better guard I would not lack,
 Than your stout forayers at my back:
 But, as in form of peace I go,
 A friendly messenger, to know,
 Why through all Scotland, near and far,
 Their king is mustering troops for war,
 The sight of plundering Border spears
 Might justify suspicious fears,
 And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
 Break out in some unseemly broil:
 A herald were my fitting guide;
 Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;

* In 1496, Perkin Warbeck was received honourably in Scotland; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catharine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions. To retaliate an invasion of England, Surrey advanced into Berwickshire at the head of considerable forces, but retreated after taking the inconsiderable fortress of Ayton.

† The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick, were very troublesome neighbours to Scotland.

‡ This is a phrase by which the Borderers jocularly intimated the burning of a house.

Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."—

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
And passed his hand across his face.
—"Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,
The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side.
Then, though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege, we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And prayed for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
Is all too well in case to ride.
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man;
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
"Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since on the vigil of St Bede,
In evil hour, he crossed the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughrig found him with his wife;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hoed, fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply sworn,
That, if again he ventures o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risques, I know;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
 Carved to his uncle, and that lord,
 And reverently took up the word.
 "Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
 If harm should hap to Brother John.
 He is a man of mirthful speech,
 Can many a game and gambol teach;
 Full well at tables can he play,
 And sweep at bowls the stake away,
 None can a lustier carol bawl,
 The needfullest among us all,
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,
 And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
 And we can neither hunt, nor ride
 A foray on the Scottish side.
 The vowed revenge of Bughtrig rude,
 May end in worse than loss of hood.
 Let Friar John, in safety, still
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,
 Roast hissing crabs, or flaggons swill:
 Last night, to Norham there came one,
 Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
 "Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
 Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer* come,
 From Salem first, and last from Rome;
 One, that hath kissed the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine,
 In Araby and Palestine
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The Mount, where Israel heard the law,

* A *Palmer*, opposed to a *Pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy shrines: travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity: whereas the *Pilgrim* retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage.

Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
 He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
 And of that Grot where Olives nod,
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,
 From all the youth of Sicily,
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.*

XXIV.

“To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
 Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
 Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
 For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.
 He knows the passes of the North,
 And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
 Little he eats, and long will wake,
 And drinks but of the stream or lake.
 This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
 But, when our John hath quaffed his ale,
 As little as the wind that blows,
 And warms itself against his nose,
 Kens he, or cares, which way he goes.”—

XXV.

“Gramercy!” quoth Lord Marmion,
 “Full loth were I, that Friar John,
 That venerable man, for me,
 Were placed in fear, or jeopardy.
 If this same Palmer will me lead
 From hence to Holy-Rood,
 Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
 Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
 With angels fair and good.
 I love such holy rambles; still
 They know to charm a weary hill,
 With song, romance, or lay :

* “Sante Rosalia was of Palermo, and born of a very noble family, and abhorred so much the vanities of this world, that she forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of, till her body was found in that cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now her chapel is built.”

Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
 Some lying legend at the least,
 They bring to cheer the way.”—

XXVI.

“ Ah! noble sir,” young Selby said,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 “ This man knows much, perchance e’en more
 Than he could learn by holy lore.
 Still to himself he’s muttering,
 And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
 Last night we listened at his cell;
 Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
 He murmured on till morn, howe’er
 No living mortal could be near.
 Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
 As other voices spoke again.
 I cannot tell—I like it not—
 Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
 No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
 Can rest awake, and pray so long.
 Himself still sleeps before his beads
 Have marked ten aves, and two creeds.”—

XXVII.

“ Let pass,” quoth Marmion; “ by my fay,
 This man shall guide me on my way,
 Although the great arch-fiend and he
 Had sworn themselves of company;
 So please you, gentle youth, to call
 This Palmer to the castle-hall.”—
 The summoned Palmer came in place;
 His sable cowl o’erhung his face;
 In his black mantle was he clad,
 With Peter’s keys, in cloth of red,
 On his broad shoulders wrought;
 The scallop shell his cap did deck;
 The crucifix around his neck
 Was from Loretto brought;
 His sandals were with travel tore,
 Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
 The faded palm-branch in his hand,
 Showed pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

Whenas the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,

Or looked more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.

But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!

And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye looked haggard wild.
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burned hair,
She had not known her child.

Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,

And blanch at once the hair;
Har! toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright *grace*,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace,

More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.

—"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
'To fair Saint Andrew's bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,"*

* St Regulus, (*Scotticé*, St Rule) a monk of Patræ in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A. D. 370, to have sailed westward, until he landed at St Andrew's in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of the Archbishops of St Andrew's, bears the name of this religious person.

Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
 From midnight to the dawn of day,
 Sung to the billows' sound;
 Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
 Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
 And the crazed brain restore:—*
 Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
 Could back to peace my bosom bring,
 Or bid it throb no more!"—

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
 Where wine and spices richly steep,
 In massive bowl of silver deep,
 The page presents on knee.
 Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
 The Captain pledged his noble guest,
 The cup went through among the rest,
 Who drained it merrily;
 Alone the Palmer passed it by,
 Though Selby pressed him courteously.
 This was the sign the feast was o'er;
 It hushed the merry wassel roar,
 The minstrels ceased to sound.
 Soon in the castle nought was heard,
 But the slow footstep of the guard,
 Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
 And first the chapel doors unclosed;
 Then, after morning rites were done,
 (A hasty mass from Friar John,)
 And knight and squire had broke their fast,
 On rich substantial repast,
 Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse.
 Then came the stirrup-cup in course;
 Between the Baron and his host,
 No point of courtesy was lost:

* St Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation. There are, in Perthshire, several wells and springs dedicated to St Fillan, which are still places of pilgrimage and offerings, even among the Protestants.

High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had past
That noble train, their Lord the last.

Then loudly rung the trumpet-call;
Thundered the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied, slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they rolled forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

To the REV. JOHN MARRIOT, M.A.

Ashestiel, Ettricke Forest.

THE scenes are desert now and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair,*
When these waste gleus with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade,
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan† to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves, and berries red;

* Ettricke Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep walks, was anciently reserved for the pleasure of the royal chase. When the king hunted there, he often summoned the array of the country to meet and assist his sport. These huntings had, of course, a military character, and attendance upon them was a part of the duty of a vassal.

† Mountain-ash.

What pines on every mountain spring,
 O'er every dell what birches hung,
 In every breeze what aspens shook,
 What alders shaded every brook!

“Here, in my shade,” methinks he'd say,
 “The mighty stag at noontide lay:
 The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
 (The neighbouring dingle bears his name,)
 With lurching step around me prowl,
 And stop against the moon to howl;
 The mountain boar, on battle set,
 His tusks upon my stem would whet;
 While doe and roe, and red-deer good,
 Have bounded by through gay green-wood.
 Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
 Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
 A thousand vassals mustered round,
 With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
 And I might see the youth intent,
 Guard every pass with cross-bow bent;
 And through the brake the rangers stalk,
 And fal'ners hold the ready hawk;
 And foresters, in green-wood trim,
 Lead in the leash the gaze-hounds grim,
 Attentive, as the bratchet's* bay
 From the dark covert drove the prey,
 To slip them as he broke away.
 The startled quarry bounds amain,
 As fast the gallant grey-hounds strain;
 Whistles the arrow from the bow,
 Answers the harquebuss below;
 While all the rocking hills reply,
 To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
 And bugles ringing lightsomely.”—

Of such proud huntings, many tales
 Yet linger in our lonely dales,
 Up pathless Ettricke, and on Yarrow,
 Where erst the Outlaw drew his arrow.†

* Slow-hound.

† The tale of the Outlaw Murray, who held out Newark and Ettricke Forest against the king, may be found in the “or-

But not more blythe that sylvan court,
 Than we have been at humbler sport;
 Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
 Our mirth, dear Marriot, was the same.
 Remember'st thou my grey-hounds true?
 O'er holt, or hill, there never flew,
 From slip, or leash, there never sprang,
 More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
 Nor dull, between each merry chase,
 Passed by the intermitted space;
 For we had fair resource in store,
 In Classic, and in Gothic lore:
 We marked each memorable scene,
 And held poetic talk between;
 Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
 But had its legend, or its song.
 All silent now—for now are still
 Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
 No longer, from thy mountains dun,
 The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
 And, while his honest heart glows warm,
 At thought of his paternal farm,
 Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
 And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
 No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
 Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
 Fair as the elves whom Janet saw,
 By moonlight, dance on Carterhaugh;
 No youthful barons left to grace,
 The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
 And ape, in manly step and tone,
 The majesty of Oberon:
 And she is gone, whose lovely face
 Is but her least and lowest grace;
 Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
 To show our earth the charms of heaven,
 She could not glide along the air,
 With form more light, or face more fair.
 No more the widow's deafened ear
 Grows quick, that lady's step to hear:

ser Minstrelsy." In the Macfarlane MS., among other causes of James the Fifth's charter to the burgh, is mentioned, that the citizens assisted him to suppress this dangerous outlaw.

At noontide she expects her not,
 Nor busies her to trim the cot ;
 Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
 Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal ;
 Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
 The gentle hand by which they re fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,
 Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
 Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
 Till all his eddying currents boil,
 Her long-descended lord is gone,
 And left us by the stream alone.
 And much I miss those sportive boys,
 Companions of my mountain joys,
 Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
 When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
 Close to my side, with what delight,
 They pressed to hear of Wallace wight,
 When, pointing to his airy mound,
 I called his ramparts holy ground !*
 Kindled their brows to hear me speak ;
 And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
 Despite the difference of our years,
 Return again the glow of theirs.
 Ah, happy boys ! such feelings pure,
 They will not, cannot long endure ;
 Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
 You may not linger by the side ;
 For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
 And Passion ply the sail and oar,
 Yet cherish the remembrance still,
 Of the lone mountain, and the rill ;
 For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
 When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
 And you will think right frequently,
 But, well I hope, without a sigh,
 On the free hours that we have spent,
 Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
 We doubly feel ourselves alone,

* There is, on a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashetiel, a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

Something, my friend, we yet may gain,
 There is a pleasure in this pain :
 It soothes the love of lonely rest,
 Deep in each gentler heart impressed.
 'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
 And stifled soon by mental broils ;
 But, in a bosom thus prepared,
 Its still small voice is often heard,
 Whispering a mingled sentiment,
 'Twixt resignation and content.
 Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
 By lone St Mary's silent lake ;*
 Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
 Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge ;
 Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
 At once upon the level brink ;
 And just a trace of silver sand
 Marks where the water meets the land.
 Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
 Each hill's huge outline you may view ;
 Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
 Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
 Save where, of land, yon slender line
 Bears thwart the lake the scattered pine.
 Yet even this nakedness has power,
 And aids the feeling of the hour :
 Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
 Where living thing concealed might lie ;
 Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
 Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell ;
 There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
 You see that all is loneliness :
 And silence aids—though these steep hills
 Send to the lake a thousand rills ;
 In summer tide, so soft they weep,
 The sound but lulls the ear asleep ;

* This beautiful sheet of water forms the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes its source. Near the lower extremity of the lake, are the ruins of Dryhope Tower, the birth-place of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations than his bride for her beauty.

Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,*
Yet still, beneath the hallowed soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton longed to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died,
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"—
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruined tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded flower.
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave;†
That wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;

* The chapel of Saint Mary of the Lowes (*de lacubus*) was situated on the eastern side of the lake, to which it gives name. It was injured by the clan of Scott, in a feud with the Craunstons; but continued to be a place of worship during the seventeenth century. The vestiges of the building can now scarcely be traced; but the burial ground is still used as a cemetery.

† At one corner of the burial ground of the demolished chapel, but without its precincts, is a small mound, called *Binnam's corse*, where tradition deposits the remains of a necromantic priest, the former tenant of the chaplainry.

On which no sun-beam ever shines—
 (So superstition's creed divines,)
 Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
 Heave her broad billows to the shore;
 And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
 Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
 And ever stoop again, to lave
 Their bosoms on the surging wave:
 Then, when against the driving hail
 No longer might my plaid avail,
 Back to my lonely home retire,
 And light my lamp, and trim my fire:
 There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
 Till the wild tale had all its sway,
 And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
 I heard unearthly voices speak,
 And thought the Wizard Priest was come,
 To claim again his ancient home!
 And bade my busy fancy range,
 To frame him fitting shape and strange,
 Till from the task my brow I cleared,
 And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life,
 (Though but escape from fortune's strife,)
 Something most matchless good, and wise,
 A great and grateful sacrifice;
 And deem each hour, to musing given,
 A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
 Such peaceful solitudes displease:
 He loves to drown his bosom's jar
 Amid the elemental war:
 And my black Palmer's choice had been
 Some ruder and more savage scene,
 Like that which frowns round dark Lochskene,*
 There eagles scream from isle to shore;
 Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
 O'er the black waves incessant driven,
 Dark mists infect the summer heaven;

* A mountain lake, of considerable size, at the head of the Moffat-water.

Through the rude barriers of the lake,
 Away its hurrying waters break,
 Faster and whiter dash and curl,
 Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
 Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
 Thunders the viewless stream below,
 Diving, as if condemned to lave
 Some demon's subterranean cave,
 Who, prisoned by enchanter's spell,
 Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
 And well that Palmer's form and mien
 Had suited with the stormy scene,
 Just on the edge, straining his ken
 To view the bottom of the den,
 Where, deep deep down, and far within,
 Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
 Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
 And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
 White as the snowy charger's tail,
 Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriot, thy harp, on Isis strung,
 To many a Border theme has rung:
 Then list to me, and thou shalt know
 Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND.

The Convent.

I.

THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
 Round Norham Castle rolled;
 When all the loud artillery spoke,
 With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
 As Marmion left the Hold.
 It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze:
 For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
 It freshly blew, and strong,
 Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,
 Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle.
 It bore a bark along.

Upon the gale she stooped her side,
 And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
 As she were dancing home;
 The merry seamen laughed, to see
 Their gallant ship so lustily
 Furrow the green sea-foam.
 Much joyed they in their honoured freight;
 For, on the deck, in chair of state,*
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
 With five fair nun, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
 Like birds escaped to green-wood shades,
 Their first flight from the cage,
 How timid, and how curious too,
 For all to them was strange and new,
 And all the common sights they view,
 Their wonderment engage.
 One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
 With many a benedicite;
 One at the rippling surge grew pale,
 And would for terror pray;
 Then shrieked, because the sea-dog, nigh,
 His round black head, and sparkling eye,
 Reared o'er the foaming spray;
 And one would still adjust her veil,
 Disordered by the summer gale,
 Perchance lest some more worldly eye
 Her dedicated charms might spy;
 Perchance, because such action graced
 Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
 Light was each simple bosom there,
 Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
 The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

* The Abbey of Whitby contained both monks and nuns of the Benedictine order; but, contrary to what was usual in such establishments, the abbess was superior to the abbot. Lindisfarne, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the episcopal seat of the see of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. St Cuthbert, who was sixth bishop of Durham, bestowed the name of his "patrimony" upon the extensive property of the see. Lindisfarne is not properly an island, but rather, a semi-isle; for although surrounded by the sea at full tide, the ebb leaves the sands dry between it and the opposite coast of Northumberland, from which it is about two miles distant.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
 But early took the veil and hood,
 Ere upon life she cast a look,
 Or knew the world that she forsook.
 Fair too she was, and kind had been
 As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
 For her a timid lover sigh,
 Nor knew the influence of her eye;
 Love, to her ear, was but a name,
 Combined with vanity and shame
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
 Bounded within the cloister wall:
 The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
 Was of monastic rule the breach;
 And her ambition's highest aim,
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
 For this she gave her ample dower,
 To raise the convent's eastern tower;
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,
 She decked the chapel of the saint,
 And gave the relique-shrine of cost,
 With ivory and gems embost.
 The poor her convent's bounty blest,
 The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
 Reformed on Benedictine school;
 Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
 Vigils, and penitence austere,
 Had early quenched the light of youth,
 But gentle was the dame in sooth;
 Though vain of her religious sway,
 She loved to see her maids obey,
 Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
 And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
 Sad was this voyage to the dame;
 Summoned to Lindisfarne, she came,
 There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
 And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
 A chapter of Saint Benedict,
 For inquisition stern and strict.

On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ;
As yet a novice unprofessed,
Lovely, and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonoured fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land :
Herself almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and withered bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below ;
Nay seemed, so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorched desart, waste and bare,
Nor wave, nor breezes, murmured there ;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackalls come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woeful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven !

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distressed—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast :
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch of the wood.
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Of put the lion's rage to shame :

And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
 With sordid avarice in league,
 Had practised, with their bowl and knife,
 Against the mourner's harmless life.
 This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
 Prisoned in Cuthbert's islet gray.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
 Of mountainous Northumberland;
 Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
 And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
 Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
 And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
 They marked, amid her trees, the hall
 Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
 They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
 Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
 They past the tower of Widderington,
 Mother of many a valiant son;
 At Coquet-isle their beads they tell,
 To the good Saint who owned the cell;
 Then did the Alne attention claim,
 And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
 And next, they crossed themselves, to hear
 The whitening breakers sound so near,
 Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
 On Dunstanborough's caverned shore;
 Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked they here,
 King Ida's castle, huge and square,
 From its tall rock look grimly down,
 And on the swelling ocean frown;
 Then from the coast they bore away
 And reached the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain
 And girdled in the Saint's domain:
 For with the flow and ebb, its stile
 Varies from continent to isle;
 Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
 The pilgrims to the shrine find way:

Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandaled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle, with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.

On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain ;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the wind's eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later stile,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been ;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower :
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they neared his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close ;

Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drowned amid the breakers' roar.

According chorus rose :

Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
Banner, and cross, and reliques there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare ;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rushed emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land ;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And blessed them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made ;
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallowed eye,
The stranger sisters roam :
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire ;
And all, in turn, essayed to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid ; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three barons bold
Must menial service do ;
While horns blow out a note of shame.
And monks cry " Fye upon your name !
In wrath, for loss of sylvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."

" This, on Ascension-day, each year,
 While labouring on our harbour-pier,
 Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear.
 They told, how in their convent cell
 A Saxon princess once did dwell,
 The lovely Edelfled ;*
 And how, of thousand snakes, each one
 Was changed into a coil of stone,†
 When holy Hilda prayed ;
 Themselves, within their holy bound,
 Their stony folds had often found.
 They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,‡
 As over Whitby's towers they sail,
 And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
 They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail,
 To vie with these in holy tale ;
 His body's resting-place, of old,
 How oft their patron changed, they told ;§

* She was the daughter of King Osway, who, in gratitude to heaven for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, dedicated Edelfleda, then but a year old, to the service of God in the monastery of Whitby, of which St Hilda was then abbess. She afterwards adorned the place of her education with great magnificence.

† The reliques of the snakes which infested the precincts of the convent, and were, at the abbess's prayer, not only beheaded, but petrified, are still found about the rocks, and are termed by fossilists, *Ammonites*.

‡ Mr Charlton, in his History of Whitby, points out the true origin of the fable, from the number of sea-gulls, that, when flying from a storm, often alight near Whitby ; and from the woodcocks, and other birds of passage, which do the same upon their arrival on shore, after a long flight.

§ St Cuthbert died in the Farne islands, and his body was brought to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the Danes, about 763, when the monks fled to Scotland, with his reliques : they paraded him through Scotland for several years, and came as far west as Whithorn, in Galloway, whence they attempted to sail for Ireland, but were driven back by tempests. He at length made a halt at Norham ; thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched upon the Tweed in a stone coffin, which landed him at Tillmouth, in Northumberland. From Tillmouth, Cuthbert wandered into Yorkshire ; and at length made a long stay at Chester-le-street, to which the bishop's see was transferred. At length, the Danes continuing to infest the country, the monks removed to Rippon for a season ; and it was in return from thence to Chester-le-street that, passing through a forest called Dunholme, the Saint and his carriage became immoveable at a place named Wardlaw, or Wardlaw.

How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
 The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
 O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
 From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
 Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
 They rested them in fair Melrose;
 But though, alive, he loved it well,
 Not there his reliques might repose;
 For, wondrous tale to tell!
 In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
 (A ponderous bark for river tides,
 Yet light as gossamer it glides,
 Downward to Tillmouth cell.
 Nor long was his abiding there,
 For southward did the saint repair;
 Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
 His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
 Hailed him with joy and fear;
 And, after many wanderings past,
 He chose his lordly seat at last,
 Where his cathedral, huge and vast
 Looks down upon the Wear:
 There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
 His reliques are in secret laid;
 But none may know the place,
 Save of his holiest servants three,
 Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
 Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
 Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir,
 (Although with them they led
 Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
 And Lothian's knights, all sheathed in mail,
 And the bold men of Teviotdale,
 Before his standard fled.*
 'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
 Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,

* When David I., with his son Henry invaded Northumberland in 1136, the English host marched against them under the holy banner of St Cuthbert; to the efficacy of which was imputed the great victory which they obtained at Northallerton.

And turned the conqueror back again,*
 When, with his Nornian dowyer band,
 He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn,
 If, on a rock by Lindisfarn,
 Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
 The sea-born beads that bear his name : †
 Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
 And said they might his shape behold,
 And hear his anvil sound ;
 A deadened clang,—a huge dim form,
 Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm,
 And night were closing round.
 But this, as tale of idle fame,
 The nuns of Lindisfarn disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
 Far different was the scene of woe,
 Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
 Council was held of life and death.
 It was more dark and lone that vault,
 Than the worst dungeon cell ;
 Old Colwulf built it, ‡ for his fault,
 In penitence to dwell,
 When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
 The Saxon battle-axe and crown.

* The Saint we are told appeared in a vision to Alfred, when lurking in the marshes of Glastonbury, and promised him assistance and victory over his heathen enemies. As to William the Conqueror, having intimated an indiscreet curiosity to view the Saint's body, he was, while in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened, seized with heat, sickness, and such a panic terror, that he fled and never drew his bridle till he got to the river Tees.

† Cuthbert since his death, has acquired the reputation of forging those *Entrochi* which are found among the rocks of Holy Island, and pass there by the name of St Cuthbert's Beads. While at this task, he is supposed to sit during the night upon a certain rock, and use another as his anvil.

‡ Ceolwulf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. He abdicated the throne about 788, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity. These penitential-vaults served as places of meeting for the chapter, when measures of uncommon severity were to be adopted. But their most frequent use, as implied by the name, was as places for performing penances, or undergoing punishment.

This den, which, chilling every sense
 Of feeling, hearing, sight,
 Was called the Vault of Penitence,
 Excluding air and light,
 Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
 A place of burial, for such dead
 As, having died in mortal sin,
 Might not be laid the church within.
 'Twas now a place of punishment;
 Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
 As reached the upper air,
 The hearers blessed themselves, and said,
 The spirits of the sinful dead
 Bemoaned their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
 Did of this penitential aisle
 Some vague tradition go,
 Few only, save the Abbot, knew
 Where the place lay; and still more few
 Were those, who had from him the clew
 To that dread vault to go.
 Victim and executioner
 Were blind-fold when transported there.
 In low dark rounds the arches hung,
 From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
 The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
 Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
 Were all the pavement of the floor;
 The mildew drops fell one by one,
 With tinkling splash, upon the stone.
 A cresset,* in an iron chain,
 Which served to light this drear domain,
 With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
 As if it scarce might keep alive;
 And yet it dimly served to show
 The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
 Were placed the heads of convents three:

* Antique chandelier.

All servants of Saint Benedict,
 The statutes of whose order strict
 On iron table lay;
 In long black dress, on seats of stone,
 Behind were these three judges shown,
 By the pale cresset's ray:
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda's there,
 Sate for a space with visage bare,
 Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
 And tear-drops that for pity fell,
 She closely drew her veil;
 Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
 By her proud mien and flowing dress,
 Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,*
 And she with awe looks pale:
 And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
 Has long been quenched by age's night,
 Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
 Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,
 Whose look is hard and stern,—
 Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
 For sanctity called, through the isle,
 The Saint of Lindisfarn.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
 But, though an equal fate they share,
 Yet one alone deserves our care.
 Her sex a page's dress belied;
 The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
 Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
 Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
 And, on her doublet breast,
 She tried to hide the badge of blue,
 Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
 But, at the Prioress' command,
 A Monk undid the silken band,
 That tied her tresses fair,
 And raised the bonnet from her head,
 And down her slender form they spread,
 In ringlets rich and rare.

* As in the case of Whitby and of Holy Island, the introduction of nuns at Tynemouth, in the reign of Henry VIII., is an anachronism.

Constance de Beverly they know,
 Sister professed of Fontevraud,
 Whom the church numbered with the dead,
 For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,
 (Although so pallid was her hue,
 It did a ghastly contrast bear,
 To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)
 Her look composed, and steady eye,
 Bespoke a matchless constancy;
 And there she stood so calm and pale,
 That, but her breathing did not fail,
 And motion slight of eye and head,
 And of her bosom, warranted,
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
 You might have thought a form of wax,
 Wrought to the life, was there;
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
 Such as does murder for a meed;
 Who, but of fear, knows no controul,
 Because his conscience, seared and foul,
 Feels not the import of his deed;
 One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
 Beyond his own more brute desires.
 Such tools the tempter ever needs,
 To do the savagest of deeds;
 For them no visioned terrors daunt,
 Their nights no fancied spectres haunt;
 One fear with them, of all most base,
 The fear of death,—alone finds place.
 This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
 And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
 His body on the floor to dash,
 And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
 While his mute partner, standing near,
 Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
 Well might her paleness terror speak !
 For there were seen, in that dark wall,
 Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall.
 Who enters at such griesly door,
 Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
 In each a slender meal was laid,
 Of roots, of water, and of bread :
 By each, in Benedictine dress,
 Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
 Who, holding high a blazing torch,
 Showed the grim entrance of the porch :
 Reflecting back the smoky beam,
 The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
 Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
 And building tools in order laid.*

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
 As men who were with mankind foes,
 And, with despite and envy fired,
 Into the cloister had retired ;
 Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
 Strove, by deep penance, to efface
 Of some foul crime the stain ;
 For, as the vassals of her will,
 Such men the church selected still,
 As either joyed in doing ill,
 Or thought more grace to gain,
 If, in her cause, they wrestled down
 Feelings their nature strove to own.
 By strange device were they brought there,
 They knew not how, and knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
 To speak the Chapter's doom,

* It is well known, that the religions who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to enclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent ; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it, and the awful words, *VADON IN PACEM*, were the signal for inmuring the criminal.

On those the wall was to enclose,
 Alive, within the tomb ;
 But stopped, because that woeful maid,
 Gathering her powers, to speak essayed.
 Twice she essayed, and twice in vain ;
 Her accents, might no utterance gain ;
 Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
 From her convulsed and quivering lip :
 "Twixt each attempt all was so still,
 You seemed to hear a distant rill—
 'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
 For though this vault of sin and fear
 Was to the sounding surge so near,
 A tempest there you scarce could hear,
 So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
 The blood that curdled to her heart,
 And light came to her eye,
 And colour dawned upon her cheek,
 A hectic and a fluttered streak,
 Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
 By Autumn's stormy sky ;
 And when her silence broke at length,
 Still as she spoke, she gathered strength,
 And armed herself to bear.
 It was a fearful sight to see
 Such high resolve and constancy,
 In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

" I speak not to implore your grace ;
 Well know I, for one minute's space
 Successful might I sue :
 Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
 For if a death of lingering pain,
 To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
 Vain are your masses too.—
 I listened to a traitor's tale,
 I left the convent and the veil,
 For three long years I bowed my pride,
 A horse-boy in his train to ride ;

And well my folly's meed he gave,
 Who forfeited, to be his slave,
 All here, and all beyond the grave.—
 He saw young Clara's face more fair,
 He knew her of broad lands the heir,
 Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
 And Constance was beloved no more.—

'Tis an old tale, and often told;
 But, did my fate and wish agree,
 Ne'er had been read, in story old,
 Of maiden true betrayed for gold,
 That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

“The king approved his favourite's aim;
 In vain a rival barred his claim,
 Whose faith with Clare's was plight,
 For he attaints that rival's fame
 With treason's charge—and on they came,
 In mortal lists to fight
 Their oaths are said,
 Their prayers are prayed,
 Their lances in the rest are laid,
 They meet in mortal shock;
 And hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
 Shout, ‘Marmion, Marmion, to the sky!
 De Wilton to the block!’
 Say ye, who preach heaven shall decide,
 When in the lists two champions ride,
 Say, was heaven's justice here?
 When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear.
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell.”—
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gathered voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

“Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
 To Whithy's convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.

'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride.

If she were sworn a nun.'

One way remained—the king's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
I lingered here, and rescue plann'd

For Clara and for me:

This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair

A saint in heaven should be.

But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice hath undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul, that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betrayed,
This packet, to the king convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic king
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones,
Whitening amid disjointed stones,

And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be."—

XXXII.

Fixed was her look, and stern her air;
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair
The locks, that wout her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seemed to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listened for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
"Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!"—

From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take,
(Such speed as age and fear can make,)
And crossed themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on.
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seemed to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.

Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
 Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
 To Warkworth cell the echoes rolled,
 His beads the wakeful hermit told;
 The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
 But slept ere half a prayer he said;
 So far was heard the mighty knell,
 The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
 Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
 Listed before, aside, behind;
 Then couched him down beside the hind,
 And quaked among the mountain fern,
 To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

To WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
 With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
 And imitate, on field and furrow,
 Life's chequered scene of joy and sorrow;
 Like streamlet of the mountain north,
 Now in a torrent racing forth,
 Now winding slow its silver train,
 And almost slumbering on the plain;
 Like breezes of the autumn day,
 Whose voice inconstant dies away,
 And ever swells again as fast,
 When the ear deems its murmur past;
 Thus various, my romantic theme
 Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
 Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
 Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
 Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
 Weaving its maze irregular;
 And pleased, we listen as the breeze
 Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees.
 Then wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
 Flow on, flow unconfined, my tale.

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell,
 I love the licence all too well,
 In sound now lowly, and now strong,
 To raise the desultory song?—
 Oft, when mid such capricious chime,
 Some transient fit of loftier rhyme,
 To thy kind judgment seemed excuse
 For many an error of the muse;
 Oft hast thou said, "If still mis-spent,
 Thine hours to poetry are lent,
 Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
 Quaff from the fountain at the source;
 Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
 Immortal laurels ever bloom:
 Instructive of the feebler bard,
 Still from the grave their voice is heard;
 From them, and from the paths they show'd
 Choose honoured guide and practised road;
 Nor ramble on through brake and maza,
 With harpers rude of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later time
 Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
 Hast thou no elegiac verse
 For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
 What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
 When valour bleeds for liberty?—
 Oh, hero of that glorious time,
 When, with unrivalled light sublime,—
 Though martial Austria, and though all
 The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
 Though banded Europe stood her foes—
 The star of Brandenburgh arose,
 Thou could'st not live to see her beam
 For ever quenched in Jena's stream.
 Lamented chief!—it was not given,
 To thee to change the doom of heaven,
 And crush that dragon in his birth,
 Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
 Lamented chief!—not thine the power,
 To save in that presumptuous hour,
 When Prussia hurried to the field,
 And snatched the spear, but left the shield:

Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
 And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
 Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
 The last, the bitterest pang to share,
 For princedoms rest, and scutcheons riven,
 And birthrights to usurpers given;
 Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
 And witness woes thou could'st not heal!
 On thee relenting heaven bestows
 For honoured life an honoured close;
 And when revolves, in time's sure change,
 The hour of Germany's revenge,
 When, breathing fury for her sake,
 Some new Arminius shall awake,
 Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
 To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

“Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
 Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
 Alike to him the sea, the shore,
 The brand, the bridle, or the oar;
 Alike to him the war that calls
 Its votaries to the shattered walls,
 Which the grim Turk besmeared with blood,
 Against the Invincible made good;
 Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
 The silence of the polar lake,
 When stubborn Russ, and metal'd Swede,
 On the warped wave their death-game played—
 Or that, where vengeance and affright
 Howl'd round the father of the fight,
 Who snatched on Alexandria's sand
 The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

“Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
 Restore the ancient tragic line,
 And emulate the notes that rung
 From the wild harp which silent hung,
 By silver Avon's holy shore,
 Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
 When she, the bold Enchantress, came,
 With fearless hand and heart on flame!
 From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
 And swept it with a kindred measure,

Till Avou's swans, while rung the grove
With Monfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakspeare lived again."—

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Would'et thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weighed
That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed or undefined ;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours ;
Or whether fitlier termed the sway
Of habit, formed in early day ?
How'er derived, its force confessed
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whitened wall
Beside the dank and dull canal ?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak ;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows :
Ask if it would content him well,
At ease in these gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between ?

No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range,
Nor for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey and Garry's lake.

Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour,
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall;
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all his round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvelled, as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.—
Methought that still with tramp and clang
The gate-way's broken arches rang;

Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
 Glared through the windows' rusty bars.
 And ever, by the winter hearth,
 Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
 Of lovers' sleights, of ladies' charms,
 Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
 Of patriot battles, won of old
 By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
 Of later fields of feud and fight,
 When, pouring from their Highland height,
 The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
 Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
 While stretched at length upon the floor,
 Again I fought each combat o'er,
 Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
 The mimic ranks of war displayed;
 And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
 And still the scattered Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
 Anew, each kind familiar face,
 That brightened at our evening fire;
 From the thatched mansion's grey-haired Sire
 Wise without learning, plain and good,
 And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
 Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
 Showed what in youth its glance had been;
 Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
 Content with equity unbought;
 To him the venerable Priest,
 Our frequent and familiar guest,
 Whose life and manners well could paint
 Alike the student and the saint;
 Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
 With gambol rude and timeless joke:
 For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
 A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
 But half a plague, and half a jest,
 Was still endured, beloved, carest.

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
 The classic poet's well-conned task?
 Nay, Erskine, nay—on the wild hill
 Let the wild heathbell flourish still;

Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
 But freely let the woodbine twine,
 And leave untrimmed the eglantine :
 Nay, my friend, nay— since oft thy praise
 Hath given fresh vigour to my lays,
 Since oft thy judgment could refine
 My flattened thought, or cumbrous line,
 Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
 And in the minstrel spare the friend.
 Though wild as cloud, as streams, as gale,
 Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale !

CANTO THIRD.

The Hostel, or Inn.

I.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode :
 The mountain path the Palmer showed ;
 By glen and streamlet winded still,
 Where stunted birches hid the rill.
 They might not choose the lowland road,
 For the Merse forayers were abroad,
 Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey
 Had scarcely failed to bar their way.
 Oft on the trampling band, from crown
 Of some tall cliff, the deer looked down ;
 On wing of jet, from his repose
 In the deep heath, the black-cock rose ;
 Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
 Nor waited for the bending bow ;
 And when the stony path began,
 By which the naked peak they wan,
 Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
 The noon had long been passed before
 They gained the height of Lammermoor
 Thence winding down the northern way
 Before them, at the close of day,
 Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
 To spend the hospitable hour.

To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone ;
 His cautious dame, in bower alone,
 Dreaded her castle to unclose,
 So late, to unknown friends or foes.
 On through the hamlet as they paced,
 Before a porch, whose front was graced
 With bush and flaggon trimly placed,
 Lord Marmion drew his rein :
 The village inn* seemed large, though rude
 Its cheerful fire and hearty food
 Might well relieve his train.
 Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
 With jingling spurs the court-yard rung ;
 They bind their horses to the stall,
 For forage, food, and firing call,
 And various clamour fills the hall,
 Weighing the labour with the cost,
 Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
 Through the rude hostel might you gaze ;
 Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
 The rafters of the sooty roof
 Bore wealth of winter cheer ;
 Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
 And gammons of the tusky boar,
 And savoury haunch of deer.
 The chimney arch projected wide ;
 Above, around it, and beside,
 Were tools for housewives' hand :
 Nor wanted, in that martial day,
 The implements of Scottish fray,
 The buckler, lance, and brand.
 Beneath its shade, the place of state,
 On oaken settle Marmion sate,

* If the Scottish inns were not good, it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature; who, so early as the reign of James I., not only enacted, that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostellaries, having stables and chambers, and provision for man and horse, but, by another statute, ordained, that no man, travelling on horse or foot, should presume to lodge any where except in these hostellaries: and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such traveler, under the penalty of forty shillings, for exercising such hospitality.

And viewed around the blazing hearth,
 His followers mix in noisy mirth,
 Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
 From ancient vessels ranged aside,
 Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Their's was the glee of martial breast,
 And laughter their's at little jest;
 And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
 And mingle in the mirth they made
 For though, with men of high degree,
 The proudest of the proud was he,
 Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
 To win the soldier's hardy heart.
 They love a captain to obey,
 Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
 With open hand, and brow as free,
 Lover of wine, and minstrelsy;
 Ever the first to scale a tower,
 As venturous in a lady's bower:—
 Such buxom chief shall lead his host
 From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
 Right opposite the Palmer stood;
 His thin dark visage seen but half,
 Half hidden by his hood.
 Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
 Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
 Strove by a frown to quell;
 But not for that, though more than once
 Full met their stern encountering glance,
 The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
 Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
 For still, as squire and archer stared
 On that dark face and matted beard,
 Their glee and game declined.

All gazed at length in silence drear,
 Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
 Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
 Thus whispered forth his mind :—
 " Saint Mary ! saw'st thou e'er such sight ?
 How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
 Whene'er the fire-brand's fickle light
 Glances beneath his cowl !
 Full on our Lord he sets his eye ;
 For his best palfrey, would not I
 Endure that sullen scowl."—

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
 Which thus had quelled their hearts, who saw
 The ever-varying fire-light show
 That figure stern and face of woe,
 Now called upon a squire :—
 " Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
 To speed the lingering night away ?
 We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

" So please you," thus the youth rejoined,
 " Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustomed Constant's strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover's lute alike ;
 To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
 Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush ;
 No nightingale her love-lorn tune
 More sweetly warbles to the moon.
 Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
 Detains from us his melody,
 Lavished on rocks, and billows stern,
 Or duller monks of Lindisfarn.
 Now must I venture as I may,
 To sing his favourite roundelay."—

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
 The air he chose was wild and sad ;

Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
 Rise from the busy harvest band,
 When falls before the mountaineer,
 On lowland plains, the ripened ear.
 Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
 Now a wild chorus swells the song :
 Oft have I listened, and stood still,
 As it came softened up the hill,
 And deemed it the lament of men
 Who languished for their native glen ;
 And thought, how sad would be such sound,
 On Susquehana's swampy ground,
 Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
 Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
 Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
 Recalled fair Scotland's hills again !

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
 Whom the fates sever
 From his true maiden's breast,
 Parted for ever ?
 Where, through groves deep and high,
 Sounds the far billow,
 Where early violets die,
 Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
 Cool streams are laving ;
 There, while the tempests sway
 Scarce are boughs waving ;
 There, thy rest shalt thou take,
 Parted for ever,
 Never again to wake,
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never. O never.

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
 He, the deceiver,
 Who could win maiden's breast,
 Ruin, and leave her?
 In the lost battle,
 Borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle,
 With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap,
 O'er the false-hearted;
 His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
 Ere life be parted.
 Shame and dishonour sit
 By his grave ever;
 Blessing shall hallow it,—
 Never, O never.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never.

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
 And silence sunk on all around.
 The air was sad; but sadder still
 It fell on Marmion's ear,
 And plained as if disgrace and ill,
 And shameful death, were near.
 He drew his mantle past his face,
 Between it and the band,
 And rested with his head a space,
 Reclining on his hand.
 His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
 That, could their import have been seen,
 The meanest groom in all the hall,
 That e'er tied courser to a stall,
 Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
 For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
 Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
 Fear for their scourge, mean villains have,
 Thou art the torturer of the brave;
 Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
 Their minds to bear the wounds they feel;
 Even while they writhe beneath the smart
 Of civil conflict in the heart.
 For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
 And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said:—
 “Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
 Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung,
 Such as in nunneries they toll
 For some departing sister’s soul?
 Say, what may this portend?”
 Then first the Palmer silence broke,
 (The livelong day he had not spoke,)
 “The death of a dear friend”*

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
 Ne’er changed in worst extremity;
 Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,
 Even from his king, a haughty look;
 Whose accent of command controlled,
 In camps the boldest of the bold—
 Thought, look, and utterance, failed him now,
 Fallen was his glance, and flushed his brow:
 For either in the tone,
 Or something in the Palmer’s look,
 So full upon his conscience strook,
 That answer he found none.
 Thus oft it haps, that when within
 They shrink at sense of secret sin,
 A feather daunts the brave:
 A fool’s wild speech confounds the wise,
 And proudest princes veil their eyes
 Before their meanest slave.

* Among other omens among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called the “dead-bell:” that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend’s decease.

XV.

Well might he falter!— by his aid
Was Constance Beverley betrayed;
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb;
But tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid,
And wroth, because, in wild despair,
She practis'd on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deemed restraint in convent strange,
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight ruellet of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey
His train but deemed the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his rage;
Or other if they deemed, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But wakened by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betrayed and scorned,
All lovely on his soul returned:
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarm,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms

XVII.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!
 How changed these timid looks have been,
 Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
 Have steeled her brow, and armed her eyes!
 No more of virgin terror speaks
 The blood that mantles in her cheeks;
 Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
 Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;
 And I the cause—for whom were given
 Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—
 Weald," thought he, as the picture grows,
 "I on its stalk had left the rose!
 Oh why should man's success remove
 The very charms that wake his love!
 Her convent's peaceful solitude
 Is now a prison harsh and rude;
 And, pent within the narrow cell,
 How will her spirit chafe and swell!
 How brook the stern monastic laws!
 The penance how—and I the cause!
 Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!"—
 And twice he rose to cry "to horse!"
 And twice his sovereign's mandate came,
 Like damp upon a kindling flame;
 And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
 She should be safe, though not at large?
 They durst not, for their island, shred
 One golden ringlet from her head."—

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
 Repentance and reviving love,
 Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
 I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
 Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
 And, talkative, took up the word:—
 "Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
 From Scotland's simple land away,
 To visit realms afar,
 Full often learn the art to know,
 Of future weal, or future woe,
 By word, or sign, or star;

Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
 If, knight-like, he despises fear,
 Not far from hence;—if fathers old
 Aright our hamlet legend told.”—
 These broken words the menials move,
 (For marvels still the vulgar love;)
 And, Marmion giving licence cold,
 His tale the host thus gladly told.

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

“A clerk could tell what years have flown
 Since Alexander filled our throne,
 (Third monarch of that warlike name,)
 And eke the time when here he came
 To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
 A braver never drew a sword;
 A wiser never, at the hour
 Of midnight, spoke the word of power;
 The same, whom ancient records call
 The founder of the Goblin-Hall.*
 I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
 Gave you that cavern to survey.
 Of lofty roof, and ample size,
 Beneath the castle deep it lies:
 To hew the living rock profound,
 The floor to pave, the arch to round,
 There never toiled a mortal arm,
 It all was wrought by word and charm;
 And I have heard my grandsire say,
 That the wild clamour and affray
 Of those dread artisans of hell,
 Who laboured under Hugo's spell,
 Sounded as loud as ocean's war,
 Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

“The king Lord Gifford's castle sought,
 Deep-labouring with uncertain thought:

* A vaulted hall under the ancient castle of Gifford, or Yester, (for it bears either name indifferently,) the construction of which has, from a very remote period, been ascribed to magic

Even then he mustered all his host,
 To meet upon the western coast;
 For Norse and Danish galleys plied
 Their oars within the firth of Clyde.
 There floated Haco's banner trim,*
 Above Norwegian warriors grim,
 Savage of heart, and large of limb;
 Threatening both continent and isle,
 Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
 Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
 Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
 And tarried not his garb to change,
 But, in his wizard habit strange,†
 Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight!
 His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
 His high and wrinkled forehead bore
 A pointed cap, such as of yore
 Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore;
 His shoes were marked with cross and spell;
 Upon his breast a pentacle;‡
 His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
 Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
 Bore many a planetary sign,
 Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
 And in his hand he held prepared,
 A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
 Had marked strange lines upon his face;
 Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
 His eyesight dazzled seemed, and dim,

* In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Firth of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. He was encountered and defeated, on the 2d October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace.

† Magicians, as is well known, were very curious in the choice and form of their vestments. The particulars of Sir Hugo's dress are to be found in the Discourse concerning Devils and Spirits, annexed to REYNALD SCOTT'S *Discovery of Witchcraft*, edition 1665.

‡ A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. This the magician extends towards the spirits which he evokes, when they are stubborn and rebellious.

As one unused to upper day;
 Even his own menials with dismay
 Beheld, Sir Knight, the griesly sire,
 In this unwonted wild attire;—
 Unwonted, for traditions run,
 He seldom thus beheld the sun.
 ‘I know,’ he said,—his voice was hoarse,
 And broken seemed its hollow force,—
 ‘I know the cause, although untold,
 Why the king seeks his vassal’s hold:
 Vainly from me my liege would know
 His kingdom’s future weal or woe:
 But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
 His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

“Of middle air the demons proud,
 Who ride upon the racking cloud,
 Can read, in fixed or wandering star,
 The issue of events afar;
 But still their sullen aid withhold
 Save when by mightier force controlled.
 Such late I summoned to my hall;
 And though so potent was the call,
 That scarce the deepest nook of hell
 I deemed a refuge from the spell,
 Yet, obstinate in silence still,
 The haughty demon mocks my skill.
 But thou,—who little know’st thy might,
 As born upon that blessed night,*
 When yawning graves, and dying groan,
 Proclaimed hell’s empire overthrown,—
 With untaught valour shalt compel
 Response denied to magic spell.’—
 ‘Gramercy,’ quoth our monarch free,
 ‘Place him but front to front with me,
 And, by this good and honoured brand,
 The gift of Cœur-de-Lion’s hand,
 Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
 The demon shall a buffet bide.’—

* It is a popular article of faith, that those who are born on Christmas, or Good-Friday, have the power of seeing spirits and even of commanding them.

His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed.—
 ‘There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—mark:
 Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down;
 A southern entrance shalt thou find;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy:
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
 Upon him! and Saint George to speed!
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know,
 Whate’er these airy sprites can show;—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.’—

XXIII.

“Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
 Alone, and armed, rode forth the king
 To that old camp’s deserted round:—
 Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound
 Left hand the town.—the Pictish race
 The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
 The moor around is brown and bare,
 The space within is green and fair.
 The spot our village children know,
 For there the earliest wild flowers grow;
 But woe betide the wandering wight,
 That treads its circle in the night!
 The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
 Gives ample space for full career;
 Opposed to the four points of heaven,
 By four deep gaps is entrance given.
 The southernmost our monarch past,
 Halted, and biew a gallant blast;
 And on the north, within the ring,
 Appeared the form of England’s king;
 Who then a thousand leagues afar,
 In Palestine waged holy war:
 Yet arms like England’s did he wield,
 Alike the leopards in the shield,

Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
 The rider's length of limb the same :
 Long afterwards did Scotland know,
 Fell Edward* was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

"The vision made our monarch start,
 But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
 And in the first career they ran,
 The Elfin Knight fell horse and man ;
 Yet did a splinter of his lance
 Through Alexander's visor glance,
 And razed the skin—a puny wound.
 The king, light leaping to the ground,
 With naked blade his phantom foe
 Compelled the future war to show.
 Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
 Where still gigantic bones remain,
 Memorial of the Danish war ;
 Himself he saw, amid the field,
 On high his brandished war-axe wield,
 And strike proud Haco from his car,
 While, all around the shadowy kings,
 Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
 'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
 Remoter visions met his sight,
 Fore-showing future conquests far,
 When our sons' sons wage northern war ;
 A royal city, tower and spire,
 Reddened the midnight sky with fire ;
 And shouting crews her navy bore,
 Triumphant, to the victor shore.
 Such signs may learned clerks explain,
 They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful king turned home again,
 Headed his host, and quelled the Dane ;
 But yearly, when returned the night
 Of his strange combat with the sprite,
 His wound must bleed and smart ;

* Edward I., surnamed Longshanks.

Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
 'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
 The penance of your start.
 Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
 King Alexander fills his grave,
 Our Lady give him rest!
 Yet still the nightly spear and shield
 The elfin warrior doth wield,
 Upon the brown hill's breast;
 And many a knight hath proved his chance
 In the charmed ring to break a lance,
 But all have foully sped;
 Save two, as legends tell, and they
 Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
 Gentles, my tale is said."—

XXVI.

The quaighs* were deep, the liquor strong,
 And on the tale the yeoman throng
 Had made a comment sage and long,
 But Marmion gave a sign;
 And, with their lord, the squires retire;
 The rest, around the hostel fire,
 Their drowsy limbs recline;
 For pillow, underneath each head,
 The quiver and the targe were laid:
 Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
 Oppressed with toil and ale, they snore.
 The dying flame, in fitful change,
 Threw on the group its shadows strange

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
 Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
 Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
 The foldings of his mantle green:
 Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
 Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
 Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
 Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
 A cautious tread his slumber broke,
 And, close beside him, when he woke,

* A wooden cup, composed of staves hooped together.

In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
 Stood a tall form, with nodding plume:
 But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
 His master Marmion's voice he knew.

XXVIII.

—"Fitz-Eustace: rise,—I cannot rest;
 Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
 And graver thoughts have chafed my mood;
 The air must cool my feverish blood;
 And fain would I ride forth, to see
 The scene of elfin chivalry.
 Arise, and saddle me my steed;
 And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
 Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
 I would not, that the prating knaves
 Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
 That I could credit such a tale."—
 Then softly down the steps they slid,
 Eustace the stable door undid,
 And, darkling, Marmion's steed arrayed,
 While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

XXIX.

"Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
 That in the hour when I was born,
 St George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
 Down from his steed of marble fell,
 A weary wight forlorn?
 The flattering chaplains all agree,
 The champion left his steed to me.
 I would, the omen's truth to show,
 That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
 Blithe would I battle, for the right
 To ask one question at the sprite:—
 Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
 An empty race, by fount or sea,
 To dashing waters dance and sing,
 Or round the green oak wheel their ring."
 Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
 And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
 And marked him pace the village road,

And listened to his horse's tramp,
 Till, by the lessening sound,
 He judged that of the Pictish camp
 Lord Marmion sought the round.
 Wonder it seemed, in the squire's eyes,
 That one, so wary held, and wise,—
 Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
 For gospel, what the church believed,—
 Should, stirred by idle tale,
 Ride forth in silence of the night,
 As hoping half to meet a sprite,
 Arrayed in plate and mail.
 For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
 That passions, in contending flow,
 Unfix the strongest mind;
 Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
 We welcome fond credulity,
 Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
 But, patient, waited till he heard,
 At distance pricked to utmost speed,
 The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
 Come town-ward rushing on:
 First, dead, as if on turf it trod,
 Then, clattering on the village road,—
 In other pace than forth he yode,*
 Returned Lord Marmion.
 Down hastily he sprung from selle,
 And, in his haste, well nigh he fell;
 To the squire's hand the rein he threw
 And spoke no word as he withdrew;
 But yet the moonlight did betray,
 The falcon crest was soiled with clay;
 And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
 By stains upon the charger's knee,
 And his left side, that on the moor
 He had not kept his footing sure.
 Long musing on these wondrous signs,
 At length to rest the squire reclines,

* Used by old Poets for *went*.

Broken and short ; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene :
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

To JAMES SKENE, Esq.

Ashetiel, Ettricke Forest.

AN ancient minstrel sagely said,
" Where is the life which late we led ?"
That motley clown, in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy viewed,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well ;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand ;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone ;
And though deep marked, like all below,
With chequered shades of joy and woe ;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged
Marked cities lost, and empires changed,
While, here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men ;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fevered the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now, it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay ;
A task so oftē thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied.

That now, November's dreary gale,
 Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
 That same November gale once more
 Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore;
 Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
 Once more our naked birches sigh;
 And Blackhouse heights, and Ettricke Fen,
 Have don'd their wintry shrouds again;
 And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
 Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
 Earlier than went along the sky,
 Mixed with the rack, the snow-mists fly:
 The shepherd, who, in summer sun,
 Has something of our envy won,
 As thou with pencil, I with pen,
 The features traced of hill and glen;
 He who, outstretched, the livelong day,
 At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
 Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
 Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
 Or idly busied him to guide
 His angle o'er the lessened tide;—
 At midnight now, the snowy plain
 Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
 Through heavy vapours dank and dun;
 When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
 Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
 Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
 Against the casement's tinkling pane;
 The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
 To shelter in the brake and rocks,
 Are warnings which the shepherd ask
 To dismal, and to dangerous task.
 Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
 The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
 Till, dark above, and white below,
 Decided drives the flaky snow,
 And forth the hardy swain must go.
 Long, with dejected look and whine,
 To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
 Whistling, and cheering them to aid,
 Around his back he wreathes the paid:

His flock he gathers, and he guides
 To open downs, and mountain sides,
 Where, fiercest though the tempest blow,
 Least deeply lies the drift below.
 The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
 Stiffens his locks to icicles ;
 Oft he looks back, while, streaming far,
 His cottage window seems a star,
 Loses its feeble gleam, and then
 Turns patient to the blast again,
 And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
 Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep :
 If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
 Benumbing death is in the gale ;
 His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
 Close to the hut, no more his own,
 Close to the aid he sought in vain,
 The morn may find the stiffen'd swain :
 His widow sees, at dawning pale,
 His orphans raise their feeble wail ;
 And, close beside him, in the snow,
 Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
 Couches upon his master's breast,
 And licks his cheek, to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
 His healthy fare, his rural cot,
 His summer couch by greenwood tree,
 His rustic kirk's* loud revelry,
 His native hill notes, tuned on high,
 To Marion of the blithesome eye ;
 His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
 And all Arcadia's golden creed ?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
 Of human life the varying scene ?
 Our youthful summer oft we see
 Dance by on wings of game and glee,
 While the dark storm reserves its rage,
 Against the winter of our age :
 As he, the ancient chief of Troy,
 His manhood spent in peace and joy ;

* The Scottish harvest-home.

But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
 Called ancient Priam forth to arms.
 Then happy those,—since each must drain
 His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
 Then happy those, beloved of heaven,
 To whom the mingled cup is given;
 Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
 Whose joys are chastened by their grief.
 And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
 When thou of late wert doomed to twine,—
 Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
 The cypress with the myrtle tie;
 Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
 And blessed the union of his child,
 When love must change its joyous cheer,
 And wipe affection's filial tear.
 Nor did the actions, next his end,
 Speak more the father than the friend:
 Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
 The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;*
 The tale of friendship scarce was told,
 Ere the narrator's heart was cold.
 Far may we search before we find
 A heart so manly and so kind.
 But not around his honour'd urn,
 Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
 The thousand eyes his care had dried,
 Pour at his name a bitter tide;
 And frequent falls the grateful dew,
 For benefits the world ne'er knew.
 If mortal charity dare claim
 The Almighty's attributed name,
 Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
 "The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
 Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
 My verse intrudes on this sad theme;
 For sacred was the pen that wrote,
 "Thy father's friend forget thou not:"

* Sir William Forbes of Pittligo, Baronet; unequalled, perhaps, in the degree of individual affection entertained for him by his friends, as well as in the general respect and esteem of Scotland at large. His "Life of Beattie," whom he befriended and patronised in life, as well as celebrated after his decease, was not long published, before the benevolent and affectionate biographer was called to follow the subject of his narrative.

And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave :—
'Tis little— but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again ;
When doing nought,—and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And desultory, as our way,
Ranged unconfined from grave to gay.
Even when it flagged, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too.
Thou gravely labouring to pourtray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray ;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, ycleped the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions viewed,
And scarce suppressed their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud ;
The stream was lively, but not loud ;
From the white-thorn the May-flower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head ;
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's bowers ;
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright, and lamps beamed gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay ;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunn'd to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he, whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer missed, bewailed the more ;

And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——,
 And one whose name I may not say,—
 For not Mimosa's tender tree
 Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
 In merry chorus well combined,
 With laughter drowned the whistling wind.
 Mirth was within; and Care without
 Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
 Not but amid the buxom scene
 Some grave discourse might intervene—
 Of the good horse that bore him best,
 His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
 For, like mad Tom's,* our chiefest care,
 Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
 Such nights we've had; and, though the game
 Of manhood be more sober tame,
 And though the field-day, or the drill,
 Seem less important now—yet still
 Such may we hope to share again.
 The sprightly thought inspires my strain;
 And mark, how like a horseman true,
 Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Camp.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
 The first notes of the merry lark.
 The lark sung shrill, the cock he crew,
 And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
 And, with their light and lively call,
 Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
 Whistling they came, and free of heart;
 But soon their mood was changed:
 Complaint was heard on every part,
 Of something disarranged.
 Some clamoured loud for armour lost;
 Some brawled and wrangled with the host;
 "By Becket's bones," cried one, "I fear,
 That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"—

See King Lear

Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
 Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
 Although the rated horse-boy sware,
 Last night he dressed him sleek and fair.
 While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
 Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
 "Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
 Bevis lies dying in his stall:
 To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
 Of the good steed he loves so well?"—
 Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
 The charger panting on his straw;
 Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,—
 "What else but evil could betide,
 With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
 Better we had through mire and bush
 Been lanthorn-led by Friar Rush."*

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
 Nor wholly understood,
 His comrades' clamorous plaints suppressed;
 He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
 Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
 And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
 And did his tale display
 Simply, as if he knew of nought
 To cause such disarray.
 Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
 Nor marvelled at the wonders told,—
 Passed them as accidents of course,
 And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
 Had reckoned with their Scottish host;
 And, as the charge he cast and paid,
 "Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said;

* This personage was a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack of Lanthorn. It is in allusion to this mischievous dæmon that Milton's clown speaks,—

She was pinched, and pulled, she said,
 And he by friar's lanthorn led.

“Dost see, thou knave, my horse’s plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!

I trust, that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trampled to and fro.”—
The laughing host looked on the hire,—
“Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou com’st among the rest,
With Scottish broad-sword to be hlest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo.”—
Here stayed their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journeyed all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
Through Humble’s and through Saltoun’s wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill;
There narrower closed, till over head
A vaulted screen the branches made.
“A pleasant path,” Fitz-Eustace said;
“Such as where errant knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion’s meed.”—
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion’s mind;
Perchance to show his lore designed
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall-window of his home,

Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton or De Worde.
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answered nought again.

V.

Now sudden distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasped his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some opener ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, showed
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward pressed,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That feudal strife had often quelled,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,

As on king's errand come;
 But in the glances of his eye,
 A penetrating, keen, and sly
 Expression found its home;
 The flash of that satiric rage,
 Which, bursting on the early stage,
 Branded the vices of the age,
 And broke the keys of Rome.
 On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
 His cap of maintenance was graced
 With the proud heron-plume.
 From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast
 Silk housings swept the ground,
 With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
 Embroidered round and round.
 The double tressure might you see,
 First by Achaius borne,
 The thistle, and the fleur-de-lis,
 And gallant unicorn.
 So bright the king's armorial coat,
 That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
 In living colours, blazoned brave,
 The Lion, which his title gave.
 A train, which well beseeemed his state,
 But all unarmed, around him wait.
 Still is thy name in high account,
 And still thy verse has charms,
 Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
 Lord Lion King-at-arms!*

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
 Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
 For well the stately Baron knew,
 To him such courtesy was due,

* Sir David Lindesay was well known for his early efforts in favour of the reformed doctrines. It was often an office imposed on the Lion King at arms to receive foreign ambassadors. The office of heralds, in feudal times, being held of the utmost importance, the inauguration of the Kings-at arms, who presided over their colleges, was proportionally solemn. In fact, it was the mimicry of a royal coronation, except that the unction was made with wine instead of oil.

Whom royal James himself had crowned,
 And on his temples placed the round
 Of Scotland's ancient diadem;
 And wet his brow with hallowed wine,
 And on his finger given to shine
 The emblematic gem.

Their mutual greetings duly made,
 The Lion thus his message said:—
 "Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore,
 Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
 And strictly hath forbid resort
 From England to his royal court;
 Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
 And honours much his warlike fame,
 My liege hath deemed it shame, and lack
 Of courtesy, to turn him back;
 And, by his order, I, your guide,
 Must lodging fit and fair provide,
 Till finds King James meet time to see
 The flower of English chivalry."—

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
 Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
 The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
 Beholding thus his place supplied,
 Sought to take leave in vain:
 Strict was the Lion-King's command,
 That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
 Should sever from the train:
 "England has here enow of spies
 In Lady Heron's witching eyes;"
 To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
 But fair pretext to Marmion made.
 The right-hand path they now decline,
 And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
 Where Crichtoun-Castle crowns the bank;*

* A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about seven miles from Edinburgh.

For there the Lion's care assigned
 A lodging meet for Marmion's rank
 That Castle rises on the steep
 Of the green vale of Tyne;
 And far beneath, where slow they creep
 From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
 Where alders moist, and willows weep,
 You hear her streams repine.
 The towers in different ages rose;
 Their various architecture shows
 The builders' various hands;
 A mighty mass, that could oppose,
 When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
 The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun! though now thy niury court
 But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
 Thy turrets rude, and tottered Keep,
 Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
 Oft have I traced within thy fort,
 Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
 Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
 Quartered in old armorial sort,
 Remains of rude magnificence:
 Nor wholly yet hath time defaced
 Thy lordly gallery fair;
 Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
 Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
 Adorn thy ruined stair.
 Still rises unimpaired, below,
 The court-yard's graceful portico;
 Above its cornice, row and row
 Of fair hewn facets richly show
 Their pointed diamond form,
 Though there but houseless cattle go
 To shield them from the storm.
 And, shuddering, still may we explore,
 Where oft whilome were captives pent,
 The darkness of thy Massy More;
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
 May trace, in undulating line,
 The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.



Engraved on Steel by Chas. Heath

Or from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun showed,
 As through its portal Marmion rode ;
 But yet 'twas melancholy state
 Received him at the outer gate ;
 For none were in the castle then,
 But women, boys, or aged men.
 With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
 To welcome noble Marmion, came ;
 Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
 Proffered the Baron's rein to hold ;
 For each man, that could draw a sword,
 Had marched that morning with their lord,
 Earl Adam Hepburn,*—he who died
 On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.
 Long may his Lady look in vain !
 She ne'er shall see his gallant train
 Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
 'Twas a brave race, before the name
 Of hated Bothwell stained their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
 With every rite that honour claims,
 Attended as the king's own guest,—
 Such the command of royal James ;
 Who marshalled then his land's array,
 Upon the Borough moor that lay.
 Perchance he would not foeman's eye
 Upon his gathering host should pry,
 Till full prepared was every band
 To march against the English land.
 Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
 Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit ;
 And, in his turn, he knew to prize
 Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,—
 Trained in the lore of Rome, and Greece,
 And policies of war and peace.

* He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where, he distinguished himself by a furious attempt to retrieve the day.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
 That on the battlements they walked,
 And, by the slowly fading light,
 Of varying topics talked ;
 And, unaware, the Herald-bard
 Said Marmion might his toil have spared,
 In travelling so far ;
 For that a messenger from heaven
 In vain to James had counsel given
 Against the English war : *
 And, closer questioned, thus he told
 A tale, which chronicles of old
 In Sccttish story have enrolled :

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

Of all the palaces so fair,
 Built for the royal dwelling,
 In Scotland, far beyond compare
 Linlithgow is excelling ;
 And in its park, in jovial June,
 How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
 How blithe the blackbird's lay !
 The wild buck bells † from ferny brake,
 The coot dives merry on the lake,
 The saddest heart might pleasure take
 To see all nature gay.
 But June is to our Sovereign dear
 The heaviest month in all the year : ‡

* This story is told by Pitcottie with characteristic simplicity. Buchanan, in more elegant, though not more impressive language, tells the same story, and quotes the personal information of our Sir David Lindesay. The king's throne, in St Catharine's aisle, which he had constructed for himself, with twelve stalls for the Knights Companions of the Order of the Thistle, is still shown as the place where the apparition was seen.

† *Bell* seems to be an abbreviation of *bellow*. A gentle knight in the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas Wortley, built Wansley Lodge, in Wanchiffe Forest, for the pleasure (as an ancient inscription testifies) of "listening to the hart's bell."

‡ The rebellion against James III. was signalized by the cruel circumstance of his son's presence in the hostile army. When the king saw his own banner displayed against him, and his son in the faction of his enemies, he lost the little courage he ever possessed, fled out of the field, fell from his horse as it started at a woman and water-pitcher, and was slain, it is not well understood by whom.

Too well his cause of grief you know,—
 June saw his father's overthrow.
 Woe to the traitors, who could bring
 The princely boy against his King!
 Still in his conscience burns the sting.
 In offices as strict as Lent,
 King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

“When last this ruthless month was come,
 And in Linlithgow's holy dome
 The King, as wont, was praying;
 While for his royal father's soul
 The chaunter's sung, the bells did toll,
 The Bishop mass was saying—
 For now the year brought round again
 The day the luckless king was slain—
 In Katharine's aisle the monarch knelt,
 With sackcloth-shirt, and iron belt,
 And eyes with sorrow streaming;
 Around him, in their stalls of state,
 The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
 Their banners o'er them beaming.
 I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
 Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
 Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
 Through the stained casement gleaming:
 ut, while I marked what next befell,
 It seemed as I were dreaming.
 Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
 In azure gown, with cincture white;
 His forehead bald, his head was bare,
 Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
 Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
 I pledge to you my knightly word,
 That, when I saw his placid grace,
 His simple majesty of face,
 His solemn bearing, and his pace
 So stately gliding on,—
 Seemed to me ne'er did limner paint
 So just an image of the Saint,
 Who propped the Virgin in her faint,—
 The loved Apostle John.

XVII.

" He stepped before the Monarch's chair,
 And stood with rustic plainness there,
 And little reverence made ;
 Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
 But on the desk his arm he leant,
 And words like these he said,
 In a low voice,—but never tone
 So thrilled through vein, and nerve, and bone :—
 ' My mother sent me from afar,
 Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
 Woe waits on thine array ;
 If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
 Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
 James Stuart, doubly warned, beware :
 God keep thee as he may !—
 The wondering Monarch seemed to seek
 For answer, and found none ;
 And when he raised his head to speak,
 The monitor was gone.
 The Marshal and myself had cast
 To stop him as he outward past ;
 But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
 He vanished from our eyes,
 Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
 That glances but, and dies."—

XVIII.

While Lindesay told this marvel strange,
 The twilight was so pale,
 He marked not Marmion's colour change,
 While listening to the tale :
 But, after a suspended pause,
 The Baron spoke :—" Of Nature's laws
 So strong I hold the force,
 That never super-human cause
 Could e'er controul their course ;
 And, three days since, had judged your aim
 Was but to make your guest your game.
 But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
 What much has changed my sceptic creed,

And made me credit aught."—He staid,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid ;
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare :
The thoughts, which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head :
Fantastic thoughts returned ;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burned.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reached the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I passed through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX.

Thus judging, for a little space
I listened, ere I left the place ;
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day
In single fight, and mixed array,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight ;

But when this unexpected foe
 Seemed starting from the gulph below,—
 I care not though the truth I show,—
 I trembled with affright ;
 And as I placed in rest my spear,
 My hand so shook for very fear,
 I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

“ Why need my tongue the issue tell ?
 We ran our course,—my charger fell :—
 What could he 'gainst the shock of hell ?—
 I rolled upon the plain.
 High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
 The spectre shook his naked brand,—
 Yet did the worst remain ;
 My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw !
 Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
 A face could never be mistook !
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And held my breath for awe.
 I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been dead.—
 I well believe the last ;
 For ne'er, from visor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghast.
 Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade ;
 But when to good Saint George I prayed,
 (The first time e'er I asked his aid,)
 He plunged it in the sheath ;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seemed to vanish from my sight :
 The moon-beam drooped, and deepest night
 Sunk down upon the heath.—
 'Twere long to tell what cause I have
 To know his face, that met me there,
 Called by his hatred from the grave,
 To cumber upper air :
 Dead or alive, good cause had he
 To be my mortal enemy.”—

XXII.

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount;
 Then, learned in story, 'gan recount
 Such chance had hap'd of old,
 When once, near Norham, there did fight
 A spectre fell, of fiendish might,
 In likeness of a Scottish knight,
 With Brian Bulmer bold,
 And trained him nigh to disallow
 The aid of his baptismal vow.
 " And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
 With Highland broad-sword, targe, and plaid,
 And fingers red with gore,
 Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
 Or where the sable pine-trees shade
 Dark Tomantoul, and Achnaslaid,
 Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
 And yet, whate'er such legends say,
 Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
 On mountain, moor, or plain,
 Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
 True son of chivalry should hold
 These midnight terrors vain;
 For seldom have such spirits power
 To harm, save in the evil hour,
 When guilt we meditate within,
 Or harbour unrepented sin."—
 Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
 And twice to clear his voice he tried,
 Then pressed Sir David's hand,—
 But nought, at length, in answer said;
 And here their farther converse staid,
 Each ordering that his band
 Should bowne them with the rising day,
 To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
 Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
 And I could trace each step they trode;
 Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone
 Lies on the path to me unknown.

Much might it boast of storied lore ;
 But, passing such digression o'er,
 Suffice it, that their route was laid
 Across the furzy hills of Braid.
 They passed the glen and scanty rill,
 And climbed the opposing bank, until
 They gained the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford ! on whose uncultured breast,
 Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
 A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
 Or listed, as I lay at rest,
 While rose, on breezes thin,
 The murmur of the city crowd,
 And, from his steeple jangling loud,
 Saint Giles's mingling din.
 Now, from the summit to the plain,
 Waves all the hill with yellow grain ;
 And o'er the landscape as I look,
 Nought do I see unchanged remain,
 Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
 To me they make a heavy moan,
 Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
 Since Marmion, from the crown
 Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
 Upon the bent so brown :
 Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
 Spread all the Borough-moor below,*
 Upland, and dale, and down :—
 A thousand d' d I say ? I ween,
 Thousands on thousands there was seen,
 That chequered all the heath between
 The streamlet and the town ;
 In crossing ranks extending far,
 Forming a camp irregular ;

* The Borough, or Common Moor of Edinburgh, was of very great extent, reaching from the southern walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills.

Oft giving way, where still there stood
 Some reliques of the old oak wood,
 That darkly huge did intervene,
 And tamed the glaring white with green :
 In these extended lines there lay
 A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
 To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
 And from the southern Redswire edge,
 To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge ;
 From west to east, from south to north,
 Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
 Marmion might hear the mingled hum
 Of myriads up the mountain come ;
 The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
 Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
 And charger's shrilling neigh ;
 And see the shifting lines advance.
 While frequent flashed, from shield and lance,
 The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
 The wreaths of falling smoke declare,
 To embers now the brands decayed,
 Where the night-watch their fires had made.
 They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
 Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
 And dire artillery's clumsy car,
 By sluggish oxen tugged to war ;
 And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,*
 And culverins which France had given.
 Ill-omened gift ! the guns remain
 The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor marked they less, where in the air
 A thousand streamers flaunted fair ;
 Various in shape, device, and hue,
 Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,

* Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwick.

Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
 Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol,* there
 O'er the pavilions flew.
 Highest, and midmost, was descried
 The royal banner, floating wide ;
 The staff, a pine-tree strong and straight,
 Pitched deeply in a massive stone,
 Which still in memory is shown,
 Yet bent beneath the standard's weight,
 Whene'er the western wind unrolled,
 With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
 And gave to view the dazzling field,
 Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
 The ruddy Lion ramped in gold.†

XXIX.

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright,—
 He viewed it with a chief's delight,—
 Until within him burned his heart,
 And lightning from his eye did part,
 As on the battle-day ;
 Such glance did falcon never dart,
 When stooping on his prey.
 " Oh ! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy King from warfare to dissuade
 Were but a vain essay ;
 For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
 Not power infernal, nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimmed their armour's shine
 In glorious battle fray !"—
 Answered the bard, of milder mood :
 " Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
 That kings would think withal,
 When peace and wealth their land have blessed,
 'Tis better to sit still at rest,
 Than rise, perchance to fall."—

* Each of these several ensigns intimated the different rank or those entitled to display them.

† The well-known arms of Scotland. According to Boethius and Buchanan, the double tressure round the shield, was first assumed by Achaius, King of Scotland, contemporary of Charlemagne.

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
 For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
 When sated with the martial show
 That peopled all the plain below,
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red;
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
 That round her sable turrets flow,
 The morning beams were shed,
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
 Where the huge castle holds its state
 And all the steep slope down,
 Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
 Piled deep and massy, close and high,
 Mine own romantic town!
 But northward far, with purer blaze,
 On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
 And as each heathy top they kissed,
 It gleamed a purple amethyst.
 Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
 Here Preston-Bay, and Berwick-Law;
 And, broad between them rolled,
 The gallant Firth the eye might note,
 Whose islands on its bosom float,
 Like emeralds chased in gold.
 Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
 As if to give his rapture vent,
 The spur he to his charger lent,
 And raised his bridle-hand,
 And, making demi-volte in air,
 Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
 To fight for such a land!
 The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
 Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they looked, a flourish proud,
 Where mingled trump, and clarion loud.

And fife, and kettle-drum,
 And sackbut deep, and psaltery
 And war-pipe with discordant cry,
 And cymbal clattering to the sky,
 Making wild music bold and high,
 Did up the mountain come;
 The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
 Merrily tolled the hour of prime,
 And thus the Lindesay spoke:—
 “Thus clamour still the war-notes when
 The King to mass his way has ta'en,
 Or to St Catherine's of Sienne,
 Or chapel of Saint Rocque.
 To you they speak of martial fame;
 But me remind of peaceful game,
 When blither was their cheer,
 Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
 In signal none his steed should spare,
 But strive which foremost might repair
 To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

“Nor less,” he said,—“when looking forth,
 I view yon Empress of the North
 Sit on her hilly throne;
 Her palace's imperial bowers,
 Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
 Her stately halls, and holy towers—
 Nor less,” he said, “I moan,
 To think what woe mischance may bring,
 And how these merry bells may ring
 The death-dirge of our gallant King;
 Or, with their larum, call
 The burghers forth to watch and ward,
 'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
 Dun-Edin's leaguered wall.—
 But not, for my presaging thought,
 Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
 Lord Marmion, I say nay:—
 God is the guider of the field,
 He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
 But thou thyself shalt say,

When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
 That England's dames must weep in bower,
 Her monks the death-mass sing ;
 For never saw'st thou such a power
 Led on by such a King."—
 And now, down winding to the plain,
 The barriers of the camp they gain,
 And there they made a stay.—
 There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
 His hand o'er every Border string,
 And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
 Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
 In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH

To GEORGE ELLIS, Esq.

Edinburg .

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
 And takes our autumn joys away ;
 When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
 Upon the weary waste of snows,
 A cold and profitless regard,
 Like patron on a needy bard ;
 When sylvan occupation's done,
 And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
 And hang in idle trophy, near,
 The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear ;
 When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
 And greyhound with his length of limb,
 And pointer, now employed no more,
 Cumber our parlour's narrow floor ;
 When in his stall the impatient steed
 Is long condemned to rest and feed ;
 When from our snow-encircled home,
 Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam.
 Since path is none, save that to bring
 The needful water from the spring ;
 When wrinkled news-page, thrice con'd o'er,
 Beguiles the dreary hour no more.

And darkling politician, crossed,
 Inveighs against the lingering post,
 And answering house-wife sore complains
 Of carriers' snow-impeged wains :
 When such the country cheer, I come,
 Well pleased, to seek our city home ;
 For converse, and for books, to change
 The Forest's melancholy range,
 And welcome, with renewed delight,
 The busy day, and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
 Lament the ravages of time,
 As erst by Newark's riven towers,
 And Ettricke stripped of forest bowers.*
 True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,†
 Since on her dusky summit ranged,
 Within its steepy limits pent,
 By bulwark, line, and battlement,
 And flanking towers, and laky flood,
 Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
 Denying entrance or resort,
 Save at each tall embattled port ;
 Above whose arch, suspended, hung
 Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
 That long is gone,—but not so long,
 Since, early closed, and opening late,
 Jealous revolved the studded gate ;
 Whose task from eve to morning tide
 A wicket churlishly supplied.
 Stern then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
 Dun-Edin ! O, how altered now,
 When safe amid thy mountain court
 Thou sitt'st, like Empress at her sport,
 And liberal, unconfined, and free,
 Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
 For thy dark cloud, with umbered lower,
 That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,

* See Introduction to Canto II.

† The old Town of Edinburgh was secured on the north side by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall, which there was some attempt to make defensible even so late as 1745. The gates, and the greater part of the wall, have been pulled down, in the course of the late extensive and beautiful enlargement of the city.

Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enrolled,—
She for the charmed spear renowned,
Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's guest,*
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet's grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful rolled
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilome, in midnight fight,
Had marvelled at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.†
The sights could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares awhile;
And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
Forgot his Columbella's claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridel advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance,—
She charmed, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!

So thou, fair City! disarrayed
Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.

* See "The Fairy Queen," Book III. Canto IX.

† "For every one her liked, and every one her loved."

SPENSER *as above*

Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
 Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
 Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
 Thy dauntless voluntary line;
 For fosse and turret proud to stand,
 Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
 Thy thousands, trained to martial toil,
 Full red would stain their native soil,
 Ere from thy mural crown there fell
 The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
 And if it come,—as come it may,
 Dun-Edin! that eventful day,—
 Renownea for hospitable deed,
 That virtue much with heaven may plead,
 In patriarchal times whose care
 Descending angels deigned to share;
 That claim may wrestle blessings down
 On those who fight for the Good Town,
 Destined in every age to be
 Refuge of injured royalty;
 Since first, when conquering York arose,
 To Henry meek she gave repose,*
 Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
 Great Bourbon's reliques, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
 How gladly I avert mine eyes,
 Bodings, or true or false, to change,
 For Fiction's fair romantic range,
 Or for Tradition's dubious light,
 That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
 Dazzling alternately and dim,
 Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
 Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
 Creation of my fantasy,
 Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
 And make of mists invading men.—
 Who loves not more the night of June
 Than dull December's gloomy noon?
 The moonlight than the fog of frost?
 And can we say, which cheats the most?

* Henry VI., with his queen, his heir, and the chiefs of his family, fled to Scotland after the fatal battle of Towton

But who shall teach my harp to gain
 A sound of the romantic strain,
 Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
 Could win the Second Henry's ear,*
 Famed Beauclerc called, for that he loved
 The minstrel, and his lay approved?
 Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
 Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
 Such notes as from the Breton tongue
 Marie translated, Blondel sung?—
 O! born Time's ravage to repair,
 And make thy dying Muse thy care;
 Who when his scythe her hoary foe
 Was poisoning for the final blow,
 The weapon from his hand could wring,
 And break his glass, and shear his wing,
 And bid, reviving in his strain,
 The gentle poet live again;
 Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
 An unpedantic moral gay,
 Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
 On wings of unexpected wit;
 In letters as in life approved,
 Example honoured, and beloved,—
 Dear ELLIS! to the bard impart
 A lesson of thy magic art,
 To win at once the head and heart,—
 At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
 My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
 Be long thy pleasing task,—but, O!
 No more by thy example teach
 What few can practise, all can preach;
 With even patience to endure
 Lingering disease, and painful cure,
 And boast affliction's pangs subdued
 By mild and manly fortitude.
 Enough, the lesson has been given:
 Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

* The courts of our Anglo-Norman kings, rather than those of the French monarchs, produced the birth of romance literature.

Come, listen, then! for thou hast known,
 And loved, the Minstrel's varying tone;
 Who, like his Border sires of old,
 Waked a wild measure, rude and bold,
 Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
 With wonder heard the northern strain.
 Come, listen!—bold in thy applause,
 The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
 And, as the ancient art could stain
 Achievements on the storied pane,
 Irregularly traced and planned,
 But yet so glowing and so grand;
 So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
 Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
 And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
 And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Court.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid;
 The barrier guard have open made,
 (So Lindesay bade,) the palisade,
 That closed the tented ground,
 Their men the warders backward drew,
 And carried pikes as they rode through,
 Into its ample bound.
 Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
 Upon the Southern band to stare;
 And envy with their wonder rose,
 To see such well-appointed foes;
 Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
 So huge, that many simple thought,
 But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;
 And little deemed their force to feel,
 Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
 When, rattling upon Flodden vale,
 The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.*

* This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England, distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
 Glance every line and squadron through;
 And much he marvelled one small land
 Could marshal forth such various band:

For men-at-arms were here,
 Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
 Like iron towers for strength and weight,
 On Flemish steeds of bone and height,

With battle-axe and spear.
 Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
 Practised their chargers on the plain.
 By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,

Each warlike feat to show;
 To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
 And high curvett, that not in vain
 The sword-sway might descend amain

On foeman's casque below
 He saw the hardy burgners there
 March armed, on foot, with faces bare,*

For visor they wore none,
 Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
 But burnished were their corslets bright,
 Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
 Like very silver shone.

Long pikes they had for standing fight,
 Two-handed swords they wore,
 And many wielded mace of weight,
 And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dressed
 In his steel jack, a swarthy vest,

With iron quilted well;
 Each at his back. (a slender store,)
 His forty days' provision bore,
 As feudal statutes tell.

His arms were halbard, axe, or spear,
 A cross-bow there, a hagbut here,

* The Scottish burghesses were appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100: their armour to be of white or bright harness. They wore *white hats*, i.e. bright steel caps, without crest or visor

A dagger-knife, and brand.—*
 Sober he seemed, and sad of cheer,
 As loth to leave his cottage dear,
 And march to foreign strand;
 Or musing who would guide his steer,
 To till the fallow land.
 Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
 Did aught of dastard terror lie;—
 More dreadful far his ire,
 Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,
 In eager mood to battle came,
 Their valour like light straw on flame,
 A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
 He knew the battle's din afar,
 And joyed to hear it swell.
 His peaceful day was slothful ease;
 Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please,
 Like the loud slogan yell.
 On active steed, with lance and blade,
 The light-armed pricker plied his trade,—
 Let nobles fight for fame;
 Let vassals follow where they lead,
 Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
 But war's the Borderers' game.
 Their gain, their glory, their delight,
 To sleep the day, maraud the night,
 O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
 Joyful to fight they took their way,
 Scarce caring who might win the day,
 Their booty was secure.
 These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
 Looked on at first with careless eye,
 Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
 The form and force of English bow.

* Bows and quivers were in vain recommended to the peasantry of Scotland, by repeated statutes; spears and axes seem universally to have been used instead of them. Their defensive armour was the plate-jack, hauberk, or brigantine; and their missile weapons cross-bows and culverins. All wore swords of excellent temper, and a voluminous handkerchief round their neck, not for cold, but for cutting. The mace also was much used in the Scottish army. When the feudal array of the kingdom was called forth, each man was obliged to appear with forty days' provision.

But when they saw the Lord arrayed
In splendid arms, and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
“Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?
O! could we but on Border side,
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistening hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
Could make a kirtle rare.”

v.

Next Marmion marked the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequered trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes brayed
To every varying clan;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Looked out their eyes, with savage stare,
On Marmion as he past;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undressed hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet decked their head;
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid
A broad-sword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.

They raised a wild and wondering cry,
 As with his guide rode Marmion by.
 Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
 The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
 And, with their cries discordant mixed,
 Grumbled and yelled the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they passed,
 And reached the City gate at last,
 Where all around, a wakeful guard,
 Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
 Well had they cause of jealous fear,
 When lay encamped, in field so near,
 The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
 As through the bustling streets they go,
 All was alive with martial show;
 At every turn, with dinning clang,
 The armourer's anvil clashed and rang;
 Or toiled the swarthy smith, to wheel
 The bar that arms the charger's heel;
 Or axe, or falchion, to the side
 Of jarring grind-stone was applied.
 Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
 Through street, and lane, and market-place,
 Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
 While burghers, with important face,
 Described each new-come lord,
 Discussed his lineage, told his name,
 His following,* and his warlike fame.—
 The Lion led to lodging meet,
 Which high o'erlooked the crowded street
 There must the Baron rest,
 Till past the hour of vesper tide,
 And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
 Such was the King's behest.
 Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
 A banquet rich, and costly wines,†
 To Marmion and his train.

* *Following*—Feudal Retainers.

† In all transactions of great or petty importance, a present of wine was an uniform and indispensable preliminary.

And when the appointed hour succeeds,
 The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
 And following Lindesay as he leads,
 The palace-halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
 That night, with wassel, mirth, and glee:
 King James within her princely bower
 Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
 Summoned to spend the parting hour;
 For he had charged, that his array
 Should southward march by break of day.
 Well loved that splendid monarch ay
 The banquet and the song,
 By day the tourney, and by night
 The merry dance, traced fast and light,
 The masquers quaint, the pageant bright,
 The revel loud and long.
 This feast outshone his banquets past;
 It was his blithest,—and his last.
 The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
 Cast on the court a dancing ray;
 Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
 There ladies touched a softer string;
 With long-eared cap, and motley vest,
 The licensed fool retailed his jest;
 His magic tricks the juggler plied;
 At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
 While some, in close recess apart,
 Courted the ladies of their heart,
 Nor courted them in vain;
 For often, in the parting hour,
 Victorious love asserts his power
 O'er coldness and disdain;
 And flinty is her heart, can view
 To battle march a lover true.—
 Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
 Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game,
 The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
 While, reverend, all made room.

An easy task it was, I trow,
 King James's manly form to know,
 Although, his courtesy to show.
 He doffed, to Marmion bending low.
 His broidered cap and plume.
 For royal were his garb and mien,
 His cloak, of crinson velvet pied,
 Trimmed with the fur of martin wild;
 His vest, of changeful satin sheen,
 The dazzled eye beguiled;
 His gorgeous collar hung adown.
 Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
 The thistle brave, of old renown;
 His trusty blade, Toledo right,
 Descended from a baldrick bright;
 White were his buskins, on the heel
 His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
 His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
 Was buttoned with a ruby rare:
 And Marmion deemed he ne'er had seen
 A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size;
 For feat of strength, or exercise,
 Shaped in proportion fair;
 And hazel was his eagle eye,
 And auburn of the darkest dye,
 His short curled beard and hair.
 Light was his footstep in the dance,
 And firm his stirrup in the lists;
 And, oh! he had that merry glance,
 That seldom lady's heart resists.
 Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
 And loved to plead, lament, and sue;
 Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain!
 For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
 I said he joyed in banquet-bower;
 But, mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
 How suddenly his cheer would change,
 His look o'ercast and lower,
 If, in a sudden turn, he felt
 The pressure of his iron belt,

That bound his breast in penance-pain,
 In memory of his father slain.*
 Even so twas strange how, evermore,
 Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
 Forward he rushed, with double glee,
 Into the stream of revelry :
 Thus, dim-seen object of affright
 Startles the courser in his flight,
 And half he halts, half springs aside ;
 But feels the quickening spur applied,
 And, straining on the tightened rein,
 Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
 Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway : †
 To Scotland's court she came,
 To be a hostage for her lord,
 Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
 And with the King to make accord.
 Had sent his lovely dame.
 Nor to that lady free alone
 Did the gay King allegiance own ;
 For the fair Queen of France
 Sent him a Turquoise ring, and glove,
 And charged him, as her knight and love,
 For her to break a lance ; ‡
 And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
 And march three miles on southern land,
 And bid the banners of his band
 In English breezes dance.
 And thus, for France's Queen, he drest
 His manly limbs in mailed vest ;

* To the weight of this belt James added certain ounces every year that he lived. The person and character of James are delineated according to our best historians. He was wont, during his fits of devotion, to assume the dress, and conform to the rules, of the order of Franciscans ; and when he had thus done penance for some time in Stirling, to plunge again into the tide of pleasure.

† Our historians impute to the king's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden.

‡ The Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, and beseeching him to raise her an army, and come three feet of ground on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring on her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses.

And thus admitted English fair,
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus, for both, he madly planned
The ruin of himself and land!

And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touched and tuned them all,
Even her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitched her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung.

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

LADY HERON'S SONG.

O. young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best:

And save his good broad-sword he weapons had none.
 He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
 There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,
 He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
 But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
 The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
 For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
 Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
 Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers,
 and all:

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
 (For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,
 "O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
 Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;—
 Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
 And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
 To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
 There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
 That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
 He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
 She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
 With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
 He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
 "Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
 That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
 While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
 And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and
 plume;
 And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better by
 far

To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochin-
 var."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
 When they reached the hall door and the charger
 stood near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
 So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
 "She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
 scaur;
 They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young
 Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby
 clan;
 Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and
 they ran:
 There was racing, and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
 But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
 So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
 Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the syren hung,
 And beat the measure as she sung;
 And, pressing closer, and more near,
 He whispered praises in her ear.
 In loud applause the courtiers vied;
 And ladies winked, and spoke aside.
 The witching dame to Marmion threw
 A glance, where seemed to reign
 The pride that claims applauses due,
 And of her royal conquest, too,
 A real or feigned disdain:
 Familiar was the look, and told,
 Marmion and she were friends of old.
 The King observed their meeting eyes,
 With something like displeas'd surprise;
 For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
 Even in a word, or smile, or look.
 Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
 Which Marmion's high commission showed:
 "Our Borders sacked by many a raid,
 Our peaceful liege-men robbed," he said;
 "On day of truce our Warden slain,
 Stout Barton killed, his vessels ta'en—
 Unworthy were we here to reign,
 Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
 Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Our herald has to Henry borne."—

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
 And with stern eye the pageant viewed :
 I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
 Who coronet of Angus bore,
 And, when his blood and heart were high,
 Did the third James in camp defy,
 And all his minions led to die
 On Lauder's dreary flat :
 Princes and favourites long grew tame,
 And trembled at the homely name
 Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat.*
 The same who left the dusky vale
 Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
 Its dungeons, and its towers,
 Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
 And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
 'To fix his princely bowers.
 Though now, in age, he had laid down
 His armour for the peaceful gown,
 And for a staff his brand,
 Yet often would flash forth the fire,
 That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
 And minion's pride withstand ;
 And even that day, at council board,
 Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
 Against the war had Angus stood,
 And chafed his royal Lord.†

* Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-Cat*, upon the following remarkable occasion. When the Scottish nobility had assembled to deliberate on putting the obnoxious favourites of James III. to death, Lord Grey told them the fable of the mice, who resolved that one of their number should put a bell round the neck of the cat to warn them of its coming; but no one was so hardy as to attempt it. "I understand the moral" said Angus: "I will *bell-the-cat*." He bearded the king to purpose by hanging the favourites over the bridge of Lauder, Cochran their chief being elevated higher than the rest.

† Angus was an old man when the war against England was resolved upon. He earnestly spoke against that measure from its commencement; and, on the eve of the battle of Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon the impolicy of fighting, that the king said to him, with scorn and indignation, "if he was afraid, he might go home." The earl burst into tears at this insupportable insult, and retired accordingly, leaving his sons, George, master of Angus, and Sir William, of Glenbervie, to command his followers. They were both slain in the battle, with two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas.

XV.

His giant-form, like ruined tower,
 Though fallen its muscies' brawny vaunt,
 Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
 Seemed o'er the gaudy scene to lower:
 His locks and beard in silver grew;
 His eye-brows kept their sable hue.
 Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
 His bitter speech he thus pursued:—
 "Lord Marmion, since these letters say
 That in the North you needs must stay,
 While slightest hopes of peace remain,
 Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
 To say—Return to Lindisfarn,
 Until my herald come again.—
 Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;*
 Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
 A chief unlike his sires of old.
 He wears their motto on his blade.†
 Their blazon o'er his towers displayed;
 Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
 More than to face his country's foes.
 And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,
 But e'en this morn to me was given
 A prize, the first-fruits of the war,
 Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
 A bevy of the maids of heaven.
 Under your guard, these holy maids
 Shall safe return to cloister shades,
 And, while they at Tantallon stay,
 Requiem for Cochran's soul may say."—
 And, with the slaughtered favourite's name
 Across the Monarch's brow there came
 A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

* The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy a high rock projecting into the German Ocean, about two miles east of North Berwick. The building is not seen till a close approach, as there is rising ground betwixt it and the land. The circuit is of large extent, fenced upon three sides by the precipice which overhangs the sea, and on the fourth by a double ditch and very strong outworks.

† A very ancient sword, in possession of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great deal of flourishing, two hands pointing to a heart, which is placed betwixt them, and the date 1329, being the year in which Bruce charged the Good Lord Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak :
His proud heart swelled well nigh to break :
He turned aside, and down his cheek

A burning tear there stole.

His hand the monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook :

“ Now, by the Bruce’s soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive !
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,

I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,

More tender, and more true :* ”

Forgive me, Douglas, once again.—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man’s tears fell down like rain.

To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whispered to the King aside :—

“ Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed !
A child will weep at bramble’s smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman’s heart :
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye ! ”—

XVII.

Displeas’d was James, that stranger view’d
And tamper’d with his changing mood.

“ Laugh those that can, weep those that may,”

Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
“ Southward I march by break of day ;

And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,

Perchance our meeting next may fall

At Tamworth, in his castle-hall.”—

* O Douglas! Douglas!
Tendir and trow.

The Howlats.

The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
 And answered, grave, the royal vaunt:
 "Much honoured were my humble home,
 If in its halls King James should come;
 But Nottingham has archers good,
 And Yorkshire men are stern of mood;
 Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
 On Derby Hills the paths are steep;
 In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
 And many a banner will be torn,
 And many a knight to earth be borne,
 And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
 Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent:
 Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may."—
 The Monarch lightly turned away,
 And to his nobles loud did call,—
 "Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!"*
 Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
 And led Dame Heron gallantly;
 And minstrels, at the royal order,
 Rung out—"Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
 What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
 Whose galley, as they sailed again
 To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
 Now at Dun-Édin did they bide,
 Till James should of their fate decide;
 And soon, by his command,
 Were gently summoned to prepare
 To journey under Marmion's care,
 As escort honoured, safe, and fair,
 Again to English land.
 The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
 Nor knew which Saint she should implore;
 For when she thought of Constance, sore
 She feared Lord Marmion's mood.
 And judge what Clara must have felt!
 The sworl, that hung in Marmion's belt,
 Had d'unk De Wilton's blood.

* The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whithy's shades,
The man most dreaded under heaven
By these defenceless maids ;
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner and nun,
Mid hustle of a war begun ?
They deemed it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assigned,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined ;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warned him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concerned the Church's weal,
And health of sinners' soul ;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street ;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night in secret there they came,
The Palmer and the holy damæ,
The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade :

There on their brows the moon-beam broke,
 Through the faint wreathis of silvery smoke,
 And on the casements played.
 And other light was none to see,
 Save torches gliding far,
 Before some chieftain of degree,
 Who left the royal revelry
 To bowne him for the war.—
 A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
 A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

“O, holy Palmer !” she began,—
 “For sure he must be sainted man,
 Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
 Where the Redeemer’s tomb is found ;—
 For his dear Church’s sake, my tale
 Attend, nor deem of light avail,
 Though I must speak of worldly love,—
 How vain to those who wed above !—
 De Wilton and Lord Marmion wooed
 Clara de Clare, of Gloster’s blood ;
 (Idle it were of Whitby’s dame,
 To say of that same blood I came ;)
 And once, when jealous rage was high,
 Lord Marmion said despiteously,
 Wilton was traitor in his heart,
 And had made league with Martin Swart,*
 When he came here on Simnel’s part ;
 And only cowardice did restrain
 His rebel aid on Stokefield’s plain,—
 And down he threw his glove :—the thing
 Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
 Where frankly did De Wilton own,
 That Swart in Guelders he had known ;
 And that between them then there went
 Some scroll of courteous compliment.
 For this he to his castle sent ;
 But when his messenger returned,
 Judge how De Wilton’s fury burned :

* A German general, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield.

For in his packet there were laid
 Letters that claimed disloyal aid,
 And proved King Henry's cause betrayed.
 His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear, by spear and shield;—
 To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wondrous are His ways above!
 Perchance some form was unobserved;
 Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;*
 Eise how could guiltless champion quail,
 Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

“His squire, who now De Wilton saw
 As recreant doomed to suffer law,
 Repentant, owned in vain,
 That, while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drenched him with a beverage rare;—
 His words no faith could gain.
 With Clare alone he credence won,
 Who, rather than wed Marmion,
 Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
 To give our house her livings fair,
 And die a vestal vot'ress there.
 The impulse from the earth was given,
 But bent her to the paths of heaven.
 A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
 Ne'er sheltered her in Whitby's shade,
 No, not since Saxon Edel fled;
 Only one trace of earthly strain,
 That for her lover's loss
 She cherishes a sorrow vain,
 And murmurs at the cross.—
 And then her heritage:—it goes
 Along the banks of Tame;
 Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
 In meadows rich the heifer lows,
 The falconer, and huntsman, knows
 Its woodlands for the game.

* It was early necessary for those who felt themselves obliged to believe in the divine judgment being enunciated in the trial by duel, to find ad hoc for the strange and obviously precarious chances of the combat.

Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
 And I, her humble vot'ress here,
 Should do a deadly sin,
 Her temple spoiled before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize
 By my consent should win :
 Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn,
 That Clare shall from our house be torn
 And grievous cause have I to fear,
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear

XXIII.

" Now, prisoner, helpless, and betrayed
 To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod
 To holy shrine, and grotto dim ;
 By every martyr's tortured limb ;
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the Church of God !
 For mark :—When Wilton was betrayed,
 And with his squire forged letters laid,
 She was, alas ! that sinful maid,
 By whom the deed was done,—
 O ! shame and horror to be said !—
 She was a perjured nun :
 No clerk in all the land, like her,
 Traced quaint and varying character.
 Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion's paramour,
 (For such vile thing she was,) should scheme
 Her lover's nuptial hour ;
 But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honour's stain,
 Illimitable power :
 For this she secretly retained
 Each proof that might the plot reveal,
 Instructions with his hand and seal ;
 And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
 Through sinner's perfidy impure,
 Her house's glory to secure,
 And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

"Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
 How to my hand these papers fell;
 With me they must not stay.
 Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
 Who knows what outrage he might do,
 While journeying by the way?—
 O' blessed Saint, if e'er again
 I venturous leave thy calm domain,
 To travel or by land or main,
 Deep penance may I pay!—
 Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
 I give this packet to thy care,
 For thee to stop they will not dare;
 And, O! with cautious speed,
 To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
 That he may show them to the King;
 And for thy well-earned meed,
 Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine,
 A weekly mass shall still be thine,
 While priests can sing and read.—
 What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—For as he took
 The charge, a strong emotion shook
 His frame; and, ere reply,
 They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
 Like distant clarion feebly blown,
 That on the breeze did die;
 And loud the Abbess shrieked in fear,
 "Saint Withold save us!—What is here!
 Look at yon City Cross!
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
 And blazoned banners toss!"—

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross,* a pillar'd stone,
 Rose on a turret octagon;

* The cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. At each angle there was a pillar, and between them an arch, of the Grecian shape. Above these was a projecting battlement, with a turret at each corner, and medallions, of rude but curious workmanship, between them. Above this rose the proper Cross, a column of one stone, upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with an unicorn. From the tower of the Cross, the heralds published the acts of Parliament.

(But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang,
 And voice of Scotland's law was sent,
 In glorious trumpet clang.
 O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon its dull destroyer's head!
 A minstrel's malison* is said.—)
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
 Figures, that seemed to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While nought confirmed could ear or
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound, and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim;
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When flings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came:†—

XXVI.

“ Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear!
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,
 I summon one and all:
 I cite you by each deadly sin,
 That e'er hath soiled your hearts within;
 I cite you by each brutal lust,
 That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
 By wrath, by pride, by fear,

* *i. e.* Curse.

† This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV.

By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
 By the dark grave, and dying groan !
 When forty days are past and gone,
 I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
 To answer and appear."—
 Then thundered forth a roll of names :—
 The first was thine, unhappy James !
 Then all thy nobles came ;
 Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
 Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
 Why should I tell their separate style ?
 Each chief of birth and fame,
 Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
 Fore-doomed to Flodden's carnage pile,
 Was cited there by name ;
 And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scriverbay,
 De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
 The self-same thundering voice did say.—
 But then another spoke :
 "Thy fatal summons I deny,
 And thine infernal lord defy,
 Appealing me to Him on High,
 Who burst the sinner's yoke."—
 At that dread accent, with a scream,
 Parted the pageant like a dream,
 The summoner was gone.
 Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
 And fast, and fast, her beads did tell ;
 Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
 And found her there alone.
 She marked not, at the scene aghast,
 What time, or how, the Palmer passed.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move.
 Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
 Save when, for weal of those they love,
 To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
 The tottering child, the anxious fair,
 The grey-haired sire, with pious care,
 To chapels and to shrines repair.—
 Where is the Palmer now ? and where

The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
 Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
 They journey in thy charge:
 Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
 The Palmer still was with the band;
 Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
 That none should roam at large.
 But in that Palmer's altered mien
 A wondrous change might now be seen;
 Freely he spoke of war,
 Of marvels wrought by single hand,
 When lifted for a native land;
 And still looked high, as if he planned
 Some desperate deed afar.
 His courser would he feed, and stroke,
 And, tucking up his sable frocke,
 Would first his mettle bold provoke,
 Then soothe, or quell his pride.
 Old Hubert said, that never one
 He saw, except Lord Marmion,
 A steed so fairly-ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came
 By Eustace governed fair,
 A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
 With all her nuns, and Clare.
 No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
 Ever he feared to aggravate
 Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
 And safer 'twas, he thought,
 To wait till, from the nuns removed,
 The influence of kinsmen loved,
 And suit by Henry's self approved,
 Her slow consent had wrought.
 His was no flickering flame, that dies
 Unless when fanned by looks and sighs,
 And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
 He longed to stretch his wide command
 O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
 Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
 Although the pang of humbled pride
 The place of jealousy supplied,

Yet conquest, by that meanness won
 He almost loathed to think upon,
 Led him, at times, to bate the cause,
 Which made him burst through honour's laws.
 If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
 Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
 North-Berwick's town and lofty Law,
 Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
 Before a venerable pile,*

Whose turrets viewed, afar,
 The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
 The ocean's peace, or war.
 At tolling of a bell, forth came
 The convent's venerable Dame,
 And prayed Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
 With her, a loved and honoured guest,
 Till Douglas should a bark prepare,
 To waft her back to Whitby fair.
 Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
 And thanked the Scottish Prioress ;
 And tedious were to tell, I ween,
 The courteous speech that passed between.

O'erjoyed the nuns their palfreys leave :

But when fair Clara did intend,
 Like them, from horseback to descend,
 Fitz-Eustace said,—“ I grieve,
 Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
 Such gentle company to part.—

Think not discourtesy,
 But Lords' commands must be obeyed ;
 And Marmion and the Douglas said,
 That you must wend with me.

Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
 Which to the Scottish Earl he showed,
 Commanding, that, beneath his care,
 Without delay, you shall repair,
 To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.”—

* The convent alluded to is a foundation of Cistercian nuns, near North Berwick, of which there are still some remains. It was founded by Duncan Earl of Fife, in 1214.

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaimed;
 But she, at whom the blow was aimed,
 Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
 She deemed she heard her death-doom read.
 “Cheer thee, my child!” the Abbess said,
 “They dare not tear thee from my hand,
 To ride alone with armed band.”—

“Nay, holy mother, nay,”

Fitz-Eustace said, “the lovely Clare
 Will be in Lady Angus’ care,

In Scotland while we stay;

And, when we move, an easy ride
 Will bring us to the English side,
 Female attendance to provide

Befitting Gloster’s heir;

Nor thinks, nor dreams, my noble lord,
 By slightest look, or act, or word,

To harass Lady Clare.

Her faithful guardian he will be,
 Nor sue for slightest courtesy

That e’en to stranger falls,

Till he shall place her, safe and free,

Within her kinsman’s halls.”—

He spoke, and blushed with earnest grace

His faith was painted on his face,

And Clare’s worst fear relieved.

The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed

On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,

Entreated, threatened, grieved;

To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,

Against Lord Marmion inveighed,

And called the Prioress to aid,

To curse with candle, bell, and book,—

Her head the grave Cistercian shook:

“The Douglas, and the King,” she said,

“In their commands will be obeyed;

Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall

The maiden in Tantallon hall.”—

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
 Assumed her wonted state again,—

For much of state she had,—
 Composed her veal, and raised her head,
 And—" Bid," in solemn voice she said,
 " Thy master, bold and bad,
 The records of his house turn o'er,
 And, when he shall there written see,
 That one of his own ancestry
 Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,*
 Bid him his fate explore!
 Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
 His charger hurled him to the dust,
 And, by a base plebeian thrust,
 He died his band before.
 God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
 He is a chief of high degree,
 And I a poor recluse;
 Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
 Even such weak minister as me
 May the oppressor bruise:
 For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
 The mighty in his sin,
 And Jael thus, and Deborah,"—
 Here hasty Blount broke in:
 " Fitz-Eustace, we must march our land;
 St Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
 All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
 To hear the Lady preach?
 By this good light! if thus we stay,
 Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
 Will sharper sermon teach.
 Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
 The Dame must patience take perforce."—

XXXII.

" Submit we then to force," said Clare;
 " But let this barbarous lord despair
 His purposed aim to win;

* Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen, having expelled the monks from the church of Coventry, was not long of experiencing the divine judgment, as the same monks no doubt termed his disaster. Having waged a leudal war with the Earl of Chester, Marmion's horse fell, as he charged against a body of the Earl's followers: the rider's thigh being broken by the fall, his head was cut off by a common foot-soldier, ere he could receive any succour.

Let him take living, land, and life;
But to be Marmion's wedded wife.

In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the king's decree,
That I must find no sanctuary,
Where even a homicide might come,
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
— The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own,
Against the dreaded hour;
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare!—
Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one;
Weeping and wailing loud arose
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them showed
His towers, Tantallon vast:
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows;
The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow draw-bridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.

It was a wide and stately square;
 Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
 And towers of various form,
 Which on the court projected far,
 And broke its lines quadrangular.
 Here was square keep, there turret high,
 Or pinnace that sought the sky,
 Whence oft the Warder could descry
 The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
 Of Douglas, why should I declare,
 Or say they met reception fair?
 Or why the tidings say,
 Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
 By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,
 With every varying day?
 And, first, they heard King James had won
 Ettall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
 That Norham castle strong was ta'en.
 At that sore marvelled Marmion;—
 And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
 Would soon subdue Northumberland:
 But whispered news there came,
 That, while his host inactive lay,
 And melted by degrees away,
 King James was dallying off the day
 With Heron's wily dame.—
 Such acts to chronicles I yield;
 Go seek them there, and see:
 Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
 And not a history.—
 At length they heard the Scottish host
 On that high ridge had made their post,
 Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
 And that brave Surrey many a band
 Had gathered in the southern land,
 And marched into Northumberland,
 And camp at Wooler ta'en.
 Marmion, like charger in the stall,
 That hears without the trumpet call,

Began to chafe, and swear :—
 "A sorry thing to hide my head
 In castle, like a fearful maid,
 When such a field is near ;
 Needs must I see this battle-day :
 Death to my fame, if such a fray
 Were fought, and Marmion away !
 The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
 Hath 'bated of his courtesy :
 No longer in his halls I'll stay."—
 Then bade his band, they should array
 For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

To RICHARD HEBER, Esq.

Mertoun-House, Christmas.

HEAP on more wood !—the wind is chill ;
 But let it whistle as it will,
 We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
 Each age has deemed the new-born year
 The fittest time for festal cheer :
 Even heathen vet, the savage Dane
 At Iol more deep the mead did drain ;*
 High on the beach his galleys drew,
 And feasted all his pirate crew ;
 Then in his low and pine-built hall,
 Where shields and axes decked the wall,
 They gorged upon the half-dressed steer ;
 Caroused in seas of sable beer ;

* The Iol of the heathen Danes (a word still applied to Christmas in Scotland,) was solemnized with great festivity. The humour of the Danes at table displayed itself in pelting each other with bones; and Torfæus tells a curious story, of one Hottus, who was so generally assailed with these missiles, that he constructed, out of the bones with which he was overwhelmed, a very respectable intrenchment, against those who continued the railery. In the dances of the northern warriors round the great fires of pine-trees, they danced with such fury, holding each other by the hands, that, if the grasp of any failed, he was pitched into the fire with the velocity of a sling. The sufferer, on such occasions, was instantly plucked out, and obliged to quaff off a certain measure of ale as a penalty for "spoiling the king's fire."

While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib, and marrow-bone;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night:
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung;*
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the misletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
Al' hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,

* In Roman Catholic countries, mass is never said at night, except on Christmas eve.

Bore then upon its massive board
 No mark to part the squire and lord.
 Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
 By old blue-coated serving-man ;
 Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,
 Crested with bays and rosemary.
 Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
 How, when, and where, the monster fell ;
 What dogs before his death he tore,
 And all the baiting of the boar.
 The wassel round in good brown bowls,
 Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
 There the huge sirloin reeked ; hard by
 Plumb-porridge stood, and Christmas pye ;
 Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
 At such high-tide, her savoury goose.
 Then came the merry masquers in,
 And carols roared with blythesome din ;
 If unmelodious was the song,
 It was a hearty note, and strong.
 Who lists may in their mumming see
 Traces of ancient mystery ;*
 White shirts supplied the masquerade,
 And smutted cheeks the visors made :
 But, O ! what masquers richly dight
 Can boast of bosoms half so light !
 England was merry England, when
 Old Christmas brought his sports again.
 'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale ;
 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
 A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
 The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger in our northern clime
 Some remnants of the good old time ;
 And still, within our vallies here,
 We hold the kindred title dear,
 Even when perchance its far-fetched claim
 To Southron ear sounds empty name ;

* It seems certain, that the Mummings of England, who used to go about in disguise to the neighbouring houses, bearing the then useless ploughshare; and the *Guisards* of Scotland, not yet in total disuse, present, in some indistinct degree, a shadow of the old mysteries, which were the origin of the English drama.

For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
 Is warmer than the mountain-stream.*
 And thus, my Christmas still I hold
 Where my great-grandsire came of old;†
 With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
 And reverend apostolic air—
 The feast and holy-tide to share,
 And mix sobriety with wine,
 And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
 Small thought was his, in after time
 E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
 The simple sire could only boast,
 That he was loyal to his cost;
 The banished race of kings revered,
 And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind,
 Is with fair liberty combined;
 Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
 And flies constraint the magic wand
 Of the fair dame that rules the land.
 Little we heed the tempest drear,
 While music, mirth, and social cheer,
 Speed on their wings the passing year.
 And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
 When not a leaf is on the bough.
 Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
 As loath to leave the sweet domain;
 And holds his mirror to her face,
 And clips her with a close embrace:—
 Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
 And as reluctant turn us home.

How just, that, at this time of glee,
 My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
 For many a merry hour we've known,
 And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.

* "Blood is warmer than water,"—a proverb meant to vindicate our family predilections.

† This venerable old gentleman was the younger brother of William Scott of Beaburn. Being the cadet of a cadet of the Harden family, he had very little to lose; yet he contrived to lose the small property he had, by engaging in the civil wars and intrigues of the house of Stuart. His veneration for the exiled family was so great, that he swore he would not shave his beard till they were restored.

Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
 And leave these classic tomes in peace!
 Of Roman and of Celtic lore,
 Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
 These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say
 Were "pretty fellows in their day,"*
 But time and tide o'er all prevail—
 On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
 Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
 What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
 Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
 To hear the clash of rusty arms;
 In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
 To jostle conjuror and ghost,
 (Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
 Before you touch my charter, hear,
 Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
 My cause with many-languaged lore,
 This may I say:—in realms of death
 Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*;
 Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
 The ghost of murdered Polydore;
 For omens, we in Livy cross,
 At every turn, *locutus Bos*.
 As grave and duly speaks that ox,
 As if he told the price of stocks;
 Or held, in Rome republican,
 The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
 Their legends wild of woe and fear.
 To Cambria look—the peasant see,
 Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
 And shun "the spirit's blasted tree."
 The Highlander, whose red claymore
 The battle turned on Maida's shore,
 Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
 If asked to tell a fairy tale:†

* "Hannibal was a pretty fellow, sir—a very pretty fellow in his day."—*Old Bachelor*.

† The belief in fairies, is deeply impressed on the Highlanders, who think they are particularly offended with mortals, who talk of them, who wear their favourite colour green, or in any respect interfere with their affairs. This is particularly to be avoided on Friday, when they are more active, and possessed of greater power.

He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
 Who leaves that day his grassy ring;
 Invisible to human ken,
 He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
 Beneath the towers of Franchémont,*
 Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
 Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?—
 Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
 A mighty treasure buried lay,
 Amassed through rapine, and through wrong,
 By the last lord of Franchémont.
 The iron chest is bolted hard,
 A Huntsman sits, its constant guard;
 Around his neck his horn is hung,
 His hanger in his belt is slung;
 Before his feet his bloodhounds lie:
 An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
 Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
 As true a huntsman doth he look,
 As bugle e'er in brake did sound
 Or ever hollowed to a hound.
 To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
 In that same dungeon ever tries
 An aged Necromantic Priest;
 It is an hundred years at least,
 Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
 And neither yet has lost or won.
 And oft the conjuror's words will make
 The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
 And oft the bands of iron break,
 Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
 Fast as 'tis opened, shuts again.
 That magic strife within the tomb
 May last until the day of doom.

* It is firmly believed by the neighbouring peasantry, that the last Baron of Franchémont deposited, in one of the vaults of the castle, a ponderous chest, containing an immense treasure in gold and silver, which, by some magic spell, was intrusted to the care of the devil, who is constantly found sitting on the chest in the shape of a huntsman. Any one adventurous enough to touch the chest, is instantly seized with the palsy. Yet if any body can discover the mystic words used by the person who deposited the treasure, and pronounce them, the fiend must instantly decamp.

Unless the Adept shall learn to tell
 The very word that clenched the spell,
 When Franch'mont locked the treasure cell.
 An hundred years are past and gone,
 And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
 Excuse for old Pitseottie say;
 Whose gossip history has given
 My song the messenger from heaven,
 That warned, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
 Nor less the infernal summoning.
 May pass the monk of Durham's tale,
 Whose Demon fought in Gothic mail;
 May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
 Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
 But why such instances to you,
 Who, in an instant, can review
 Your treasured hoards of various lore,
 And furnish twenty thousand more?
 Hoards, not like their's whose volumes rest
 Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest;
 While gripple owners still refuse
 To others what they cannot use;
 Give them the priest's whole century,
 They shall not spell you letters three;
 Their pleasure in the book's the same
 The magpie takes in pilfered gem.
 Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
 Delight, amusement, science, art,
 To every ear and eye impart;
 Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
 Can, like the owner's self, enjoy them?—
 But, hark! I hear the distant drum:
 The day of Flodden field is come.—
 Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
 And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Battle.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
 And each hour brought a varying tale,

And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
And like the impatient steed of war,
He snuffed the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again,
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguér lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
While these things were, the mournful **Clare**
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless prayed,
To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing pressed
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthened prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart,
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep,
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repelled the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vexed the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by
Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go;
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,

Its varying circle did combine
 Bulwark, and bartisan, and line,
 And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign;
 Above the booming ocean leant
 The far-projecting battlement;
 The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
 Upon the precipice below.
 Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
 Gate-works, and walls, were strongly manned;
 No need upon the sea-girt side;
 The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
 Approach of human step denied;
 And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
 Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
 Would to these battlements repair,
 And muse upon her sorrows there,
 And list the sea-bird's cry;
 Or slow, like noon-tide ghost, would glide
 Along the dark-gray bulwarks' side,
 And ever on the heaving tide
 Look down with weary eye.
 Oft did the cliff, and swelling main,
 Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
 A home she might ne'er see again;
 For she had laid adown,
 So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
 And frontlet of the cloister pale,
 And Benedictine gown:
 It were unseemly sight, he said,
 A novice out of convent shade.—
 Now her bright locks, with sunny glow
 Again adorned her brow of snow;
 Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
 A deep and fretted broidery bound,
 In golden foldings sought the ground;
 Of holy ornament, alone
 Remained a cross with ruby stone;
 And often did she look
 On that which in her hand she bore
 With velvet bound, and broidered o'er,
 Her breviary book

In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been,
To meet a form so richly dressed,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear,—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been.
Or, in romance, some spell-bound queen;
For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess there,
Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision, and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O! wherefore to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny!
Was it, that, seared by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him that taught them first to glow?—
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command,
That ruled thy simple maiden band.—
How different now! condemned to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,

Descended to a feeble girl,
 From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
 Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
 He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

"But see!—what makes this armour here?"
 For in her path there lay
 Targe, corslet, helm;—she viewed them near.—
 "The breast-plate pierced!—Aye, much I fear,
 Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
 That hath made fatal entrance here,
 As these dark blood-gouts say.—
 Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corslet's ward,
 Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
 Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
 On yon disastrous day!"—
 She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
 WILTON himself before her stood!
 It might have seemed his passing ghost,
 For every youthful grace was lost;
 And joy unwonted, and surprise,
 Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
 Expect not, noble dames and lords,
 That I can tell such scene in words:
 What skilful limner e'er would choose
 To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
 Unless to mortal it were given
 To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
 Far less can my weak line declare
 Each changing passion's shade;
 Brightening to rapture from despair,
 Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
 And joy, with her angelic air,
 And hope, that paints the future fair,
 Their varying hues displayed:
 Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
 Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
 Till all fatigued, the conflict yield,
 And mighty Love retains the field.
 Shortly I tell what then he said,
 By many a tender word delayed,

And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply.

VI.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

“Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragged,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense returned to wake despair
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds arrayed,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journeyed many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason feared,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes upreared.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon;
And while upon his dying bed,
He begged of me a boon—

If ere my deadliest enemy
 Beneath my brand should conquered lie,
 Even then my mercy should awake,
 And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

"Still restless as a second Cain,
 To Scotland next my rout was ta'en.
 Full well the paths I knew;
 Fame of my fate made various sound,
 That death in pilgrimage I found,
 That I had perished of my wound,—
 None cared which tale was true:
 And living eye could never guess
 De Wilton in his palmer's dress;
 For now that sable slough is shed,
 And trimmed my shaggy beard and head,
 I scarcely know me in a glass.
 A chance most wond'rous did provide,
 That I should be that Baron's guide—
 I will not name his name!—
 Vengeance to God alone belongs;
 But, when I think on all my wrongs,
 My blood is liquid flame!
 And ne'er the time shall I forget,
 When, in a Scottish hostel set,
 Dark looks we did exchange:
 What were his thoughts I cannot tell
 But in my bosom mustered Hell
 Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

"A word of vulgar augury,
 That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
 Brought on a village tale;
 Which wrought upon his moody sprite
 And sent him armed forth by night.
 I borrowed steed and mail,
 And weapons, from his sleeping band;
 And, passing from a postern door,
 We met, and 'countered, hand to hand,—
 He fell on Gifford-moor.

For the death-stroke my brand I drew,
 (O then my helmed head he knew,
 The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
 Then had three inches of my blade
 The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
 My hand the thought of Austin staid;

I left him there alone.—

O good old man! even from the grave,
 Thy spirit could thy master save:
 If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
 Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
 Given to my hand this packet dear,
 Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—

Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,

That broke our secret speech—

It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle played,

A tale of peace to teach.

Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

“Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
 To Douglas late my tale I told,
 To whom my house was known of old.
 Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.
 These were the arms that once did turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the field.
 These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
 Ere morn, shall every breach repair;
 For nought, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armour on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and gray-haired men;
 The rest were all in Twisell glen.*
 And now I watch my armour here,
 By law of arms, till midnight's near;

* Where James encamped before taking post on Flodden.

Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

"There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This Baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his king's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more"——"O, Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not a humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?—
That reddening brow!—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"—

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moon-beam slumbering lay,
And poured its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrazure,
Upon Tautallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was there need; though, seamed with scars
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,

Though two gray priests were there,
 And each a blazing torch held high,
 You could not by their blaze descry
 The chapel's carving fair.
 Amid that dim and smoky light,
 Chequering the silvery moon-shine bright,
 A bishop by the altar stood,*
 A noble lord of Douglas blood,
 With mitre sheen, and rocquet white;
 Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
 But little pride of prelacy :
 More pleased that, in a barbarous age
 He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
 Than that beneath his rule he held
 The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
 Beside him ancient Angus stood,
 Doffed his furred gown, and sable hood :
 O'er his huge form, and visage pale,
 He wore a cap and shirt of mail ;
 And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
 Upon the huge and sweeping brand,
 Which wont, of yore, in battle-fray,
 His foeman's limbs to shred away,
 As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.†
 He seemed as, from the tombs around
 Rising at judgment-day,
 Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array ;
 So pale his face, so huge his limb,
 So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his heels ;
 And think what next he must have-felt,
 At buckling of the falchion belt !

* The well-known Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus. He was author of a Scottish metrical version of the *Æneid*, and of many other poetical pieces of great merit. He had not at this period attained the mitre.

† Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage. Spens of Kilspindie, a favourite of James IV., having spoken of him lightly, the Earl met him while hawking, and compelling him to single combat, at one blow cut asunder his thigh bone, and killed him on the spot.

And judge how Clara changed her hue,
 While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger tried,
 He once had found untrue!
 Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
 "Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
 I dub thee knight.
 Arise Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
 For king, for church, for lady fair,
 See that thou fight."—
 And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
 Said,—“Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
 Disgrace, and trouble,
 For He, who honour best bestows,
 May give thee double.”—
 De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must—
 “Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
 That Douglas is my brother!”—
 “Nay, nay,” old Angus said, “not so;
 To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
 Thy wrongs no longer smother.
 I have two sons in yonder field;
 And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
 Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
 And foul fall him that blanches first!”

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
 When Marmion did his troop array
 To Surrey's camp to ride;
 He had safe-conduct for his band,
 Beneath the royal seal and hand,
 And Douglas gave a guide:
 The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
 Would Clara on her palfrey place,
 And whispered, in an under tone,
 “Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown.”
 The train from out the castle drew;
 But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu:—
 “Though something I might plain,” he said,
 “Of cold respect to stranger guest,
 Sent hither by your king's behest,
 While in Tantallon's towers I staid;

Part we in friendship from your land,
 And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
 But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
 Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—
 "My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
 Be open at my sovereign's will,
 To each one whom he lists, howe'er
 Unmeet to be the owner's peer,
 My castles are my king's alone,
 From turret to foundation-stone—
 The hand of Douglas is his own ;
 And never shall in friendly grasp
 The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

XIV

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
 And shook his very frame for ire,
 And—"This to me!" he said,—
 "An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
 Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
 To cleave the Douglas' head!
 And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
 He, who does England's message here,
 Although the meanest in her state,
 May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
 And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
 Even in thy pitch of pride,
 Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
 (Nay, never look upon your lord,
 And lay your hands upon your sword,)
 I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
 And if thou said'st, I am not peer
 To any lord in Scotland here,
 Lowland or Highland, far or near,
 Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—
 On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
 O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
 Fierce he broke forth :—"And dar'st thou then
 To beard the lion in his den,
 The Douglas in his hall?
 And hop'st thou hence unscathed to go?—
 No, by Saint Bryde of Bothwell, no!—
 Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder ho!
 Let the portcullis fall."—

Lord Marmion turned,—well was his need,
 And dashed the rowels in his steed,
 Like arrow through the arch-way sprung,
 The ponderous grate behind him rung :
 To pass there was such scanty room,
 The bars, descending, razed his plume.*

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
 Just as it trembled on the rise ;
 Not lighter does the swallow skim
 Along the smooth lake's level brim :
 And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
 He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
 And shout of loud defiance pours,
 And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
 "Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase!"
 But soon he reined his fury's pace :
 "A royal messenger he came,
 Though most unworthy of the name.—
 A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
 Did ever knight so foul a deed!
 At first in heart it liked me ill,
 When the King praised his clerkly skill.
 Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line :

* This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas, Maclellan, tutor of Bomby, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the Barons of Galloway, was imprisoned by the Earl, in his castle of the Thrieve. Sir Patrick Gray, uncle to the tutor of Bomby, obtained from the King a "sweet letter of supplication," praying the Earl to deliver his prisoner unto Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all due honour; but while he was at dinner, the earl caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the king's letter to the Earl, who led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and said, "Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will." Sir Patrick answered again with a sore heart, and said, "My lord, if ve have taken from him his head, dispoone upon the body as you please:" and with that called for his horse, and when he was on horseback, he said to the Earl, "My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labours, that you have used at this time, according to your demerits." At this the Earl was highly offended, and cried for horse. Sir Patrick, seeing the Earl's fury, spurred his horse, but he was chased near Edinburgh ere they left him.

So swore I, and I swear it still,
 Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
 Saint Mary mend my tiery mood!
 Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
 I thought to slay him where he stood.—
 'Tis pity of him, too," he cried;
 " Bold can he speak, and fairly ride:
 I warrant him a warrior tried."—
 With this his mandate he recalls,
 And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
 Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
 They crossed the heights of Stanrigg-moor
 His troop more closely there he scann'd,
 And missed the Palmer from the band.—
 " Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
 " He parted at the peep of day;
 Good sooth it was in strange array."
 " In what array?" said Marmion, quick.
 " My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
 But all night long, with clink and bang,
 Close to my couch did hammers clang;
 At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
 And from a loop-hole while I peep,
 Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
 Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
 As fearful of the morning air;
 Beneath, when that was blown aside,
 A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
 By Archibald won in bloody work,
 Against the Saracen and Turk:
 Last night it hung not in the hall;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed,
 A matchless horse, though something old,
 Prompt to his paces, cool and bold.
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master* pray
 To use him on the battle-day;

* His eldest son, the Master of Angus.

But he preferred"—"Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?"—

XVII.

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For I then stood by Henry's side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl's own favourite steed;
All sheathed he was in armour bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
Lord Angus wished him speed."—
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
"Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
He muttered; "'Twas not fay nor ghost,
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now?—he told his tale
To Douglas; and with some avail;
'Twas therefore gloomed his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain,
'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that I trow.—
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
Must separate Constance from the Nun—
O what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive —
A Palmer too!—no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
I might have known there was but one,
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reached, at eve, the Tweed,

Where Lennel's convent closed their march:*

(There now is left but one frail arch,

Yet mourn thou not its cells;

Our time a fair exchange has made;

Hard by, in hospitable shade,

A reverend pilgrim dwells,

Well worth the whole Bernardine brood,

That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)

Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there

Give Marmion entertainment fair,

And lodging for his train, and Clare.

Next morn the Baron climbed the tower,

To view afar the Scottish power,

Encamped on Flodden edge:

The white pavilions made a show,

Like remnants of the winter snow,

Along the dusky ridge.

Long Marmion looked:—at length his eye

Unusual movement might descry,

Amid the shifting lines:

The Scottish host drawn out appears,

For, flashing on the hedge of spears

The eastern sun-beam shines.

Their front now deepening, now extending,

Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,

Now drawing back, and now descending,

The skilful Marmion well could know,

They watched the motions of some foe,

Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was:—from Flodden ridge

The Scots beheld the English host

Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,

And heedful watched them as they crossed

The Till by Twisel bridge.†

* This was a Cistercian house of religion, now almost entirely demolished. It is situated near Coldstream, almost opposite to Cornhill, and consequently very near to Flodden Field.

† On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's head-quarters were at Barmoor wood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden hills, one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winds between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September, 1513, Surrey marched in

High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.

By rock, by oak, by hawthorn tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing,

Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,

Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,

And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.

That morn, to many a trumpet-clang,
Twisel! thy rocks deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the Dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?

north-westerly direction, and, turning eastward, crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel-bridge, nigh where that river joins the Tweed, his rear-guard column passing about a mile higher, by a ford. This movement had the double effect of placing his army between King James and his supplies from Scotland, and of striking the Scottish monarch with surprise, as he seems to have relied on the depth of the river in his front.

What vails the vain knight-errant's ~~prize~~
 O, Douglas, for thy leading waud!
 Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
 O for one hour of Wallace wight,
 Or well skilled Bruce, to rule the fight,
 And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
 Another sight had seen that morn,
 From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
 And Flodden had been Bannock-bourne!—
 The precious hour has passed in ~~vain~~.
 And England's host has gained the plain;
 Wheeling their march, and circling still,
 Around the base of Flodden-hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
 Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,—
 "Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
 And see ascending squadrons come
 Between Tweed's river and the hill,
 Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
 My basnet to a 'prentice cap,
 Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
 Yet more! yet more!—how fair arrayed
 They file from out the hawthorn shade,
 And sweep so gallant by!
 With all their banners bravely spread,
 And all their armour flashing high,
 Saint George might waken from the dead,
 To see fair England's standards fly."—
 "Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount; "thou'dst best,
 And listen to our lord's behest."—
 With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
 "This instant be our band arrayed;
 The river must be quickly crossed,
 That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
 If fight King James,—as well I trust,
 That fight he will, and fight he must,—
 The Lady Clare behind our lines
 Shall tarry, while the battle joins."—

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
 Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu:

Far less would listen to his prayer,
 To leave behind the helpless Clare.
 Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
 And muttered, as the flood they view,
 "The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
 He scarce will yield to please a daw :
 Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
 So Clare shall bide with me."
 Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
 Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
 He ventured desperately ;
 And not a moment will he bide,
 Till squire, or groom, before him ride ;
 Headmost of all he stems the tide,
 And stems it gallantly.
 Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
 Old Hubert led her rein,
 Stoutly they braved the current's course,
 And, though far downward driven per force,
 The southern bank they gain ;
 Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
 As best they might, the train :
 Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
 A caution not in vain ;
 Deep need that day that every string,
 By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
 A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
 And breathed his steed, his men arrayed,
 Then forward moved his band,
 Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
 He halted by a cross of stone,
 That, on a hillock standing lone,
 Did all the field command.

XXIII.

ence might they see the full array
 either host. or deadly fray ;*

* When the English army, by their skilful counter-march, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighbouring eminence of Brankstone, on which that village is built. Thus the two armies met, almost without seeing each other. The English army advanced in four divisions. When the smoke was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence.

Their marshalled lines stretched east
 And fronted north and south,
 And distant salutation past
 From the loud cannon mouth ;
 Not in the close successive rattle,
 That breathes the voice of modern battle,
 But slow and far between.—
 The hillock gained, Lord Marmion staid :
 “ Here, by this cross,” he gently said,
 “ You well may view the scene.
 Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
 O ! think of Marmion in thy prayer !—
 Thou wilt not ?—well,—no less my care
 Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
 You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
 With ten picked archers of my train ;
 With England if the day go hard,
 To Berwick speed amain.—
 But, if we conquer, cruel maid !
 My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
 When here we meet again.”—
 He waited not for answer there,
 And would not mark the maid’s despair,
 Nor heed the discontented look
 From either squire ; but spurred amain,
 And, dashing through the battle-plain,
 His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

“ —The good Lord Marmion, by my life !
 Welcome to danger’s hour !
 Short greeting serves in time of strife :—
 Thus have I ranged my power :
 Myself will rule this central host,
 Stout Stanly fronts their right,
 My sons command the vaward post,
 With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight ;*
 Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,

* Sir Brian Tunstall, called in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undeiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. Perhaps he derived his epithet of *undeiled* from his white armour and banner, as well as from his unstained loyalty and knightly faith. His place of residence was Thurland Castle.

Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
 And succour those that need it most.
 Now, gallant Marmion, well I know
 Would gladly to the vanguard go ;
 Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
 With thee their charge will blithely share ;
 There fight thine own retainers too,
 Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
 "Thanks, noble Surry !" Marmion said,
 Nor further greeting there he paid ;
 But, parting like a thunderbolt,
 First in the vanguard made a halt,
 Where such a shout there rose
 Of "Marmion ! Marmion !" that the cry
 Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
 Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill ;
 On which, (for far the day was spent,)
 The western sunbeams now were bent.
 The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view :
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay !
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But, see ! look up—on Flodden bent,
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."—
 And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till,
 Was wreathed in sable smoke ;
 Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke ;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march ; their tread alone,
 At times one warning trumpet blown,
 At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain-throne,
 King James did rushing come.—

Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air.
Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI.

At length the froshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight;
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Highlandman,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntley, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;

Though there the western mountaineer
 Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
 And flung the feeble targe aside,
 And with both hands the broad-sword plied :
 'Twas vain.—But Fortune, on the right,
 With fickle smile, cheered Scotland's fight.
 Then fell that spotless banner white,
 The Howard's lion fell ;
 Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
 With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
 Around the battle yell.
 The Border slogan rent the sky !
 A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry ;
 Loud were the clanging blows ;
 Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high
 The pennon sunk and rose ;
 As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
 When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
 It wavered mid the foes.
 No longer Blount the view could bear :—
 “ By heaven, and all its saints ! I swear,
 I will not see it lost !
 Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
 May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
 I gallop to the host.”
 And to the fray he rode amain,
 Followed by all the archer train.
 The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
 Made, for a space, an opening large,—
 The rescued banner rose,—
 But darkly closed the war around,
 Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.
 Then Eustace mounted too ;—yet staid,
 As loth to leave the helpless maid,
 When, fast as shaft can fly,
 Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
 The loose rein dangling from his head,
 Housing and saddle bloody red,
 Lord Marmion's steed rushed by ;
 And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
 A look and sign to Clara cast,
 To mark he would return in haste,
 Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
 Left in that dreadful hour alone :
 Perchance her reason stoops, or reels ;
 Perchance a courage, not her own,
 Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
 The scattered van of England wheels ;
 She only said, as loud in air
 The tumult roared, “ Is Wilton there ? ”—
 They fly, or, maddened by despair,
 Fight but to die.—“ Is Wilton there ! ”—
 With that, straight up the hill there rode
 Two horsemen drenched with gore,
 And in their arms, a helpless load,
 A wounded knight they bore.
 His hand still strained the broken brand ;
 His arms were smeared with blood, and sand :
 Dragged from among the horses’ feet,
 With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
 The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
 Can that be haughty Marmion !
 Young Blount his armour did unlace,
 And, gazing on his ghastly face,
 Said—“ By Saint George, he’s gone !
 That spear-wound has our master sped,
 And see the deep cut on his head !
 Good night to Marmion.”—
 “ Unnurtured Blount !—thy brawling cease :
 He opes his eyes,” said Eustace ; “ peace ! ”—

XXIX.

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
 Around’gan Marmion wildly stare :—
 “ Where’s Harry Blount ? Fitz-Eustace where ?
 Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare !
 Redeem my pennon,—charge again !
 Cry—‘ Marmion to the rescue ! ’—Vain !
 Last of my race, on battle plain
 That shout shall ne’er be heard again !—
 Yet my last thought is England’s :—fly,
 To Dacre bear my signet-ring ;
 Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
 Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey lie :

Tunstall lies dead upon the field ;
 His life-blood stains the spotless shield :
 Edmund is down ;—my life is left ;—
 The Admiral alone 's left.
 Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
 With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
 Full upon Scotland's central host,
 Or victory and England's lost.—
 Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
 Leave Marmion here alone—to die.”—
 They parted, and alone he lay ;
 Clare drew her from the sight away,
 Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
 And half he murmured,—“ Is there none,
 Of all my halls have nurst,
 Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
 Of blessed water, from the spring,
 To slake my dying thirst !”—

XXX.

O, woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made ;
 When pain and anguish wring the brow
 A ministering angel thou !—
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran :
 Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears ;
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stooped her by the runnel's side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew
 For, oozing from the mountain wide,
 Where raged the war, a dark red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn !—behold her mark
 A little fountain-cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,

“Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray,
 For the kind soul of Sybil Grey,
 Who built this cross, and well.”
 She filled the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head ;
 A pious man, whom duty brought
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
 And, as she stooped his brow to lave—
 “Is it the hand of Clare,” he said,
 “Or injured Constance, bathes my head !”
 Then, as remembrance rose,—
 “Speak not to me of shrift or prayer !
 I must redress her woes.
 Short space, few words, are mine to spare ;
 Forgive and listen, gentle Clare !”—
 “Alas !” she said, “the while,—
 O think of your immortal weal !
 In vain for Constance is your zeal ;
 She—died at Holy Isle.”—
 Lord Marmion started from the ground,
 As light as if he felt no wound ;
 Though in the action burst the tide,
 In torrents, from his wounded side.
 “Then it was truth !”—he said—“I knew
 That the dark presage must be true.—
 I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
 The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
 Would spare me but a day !
 For wasting fire, and dying groan,
 And priests slain on the altar stone,
 Might bribe him for delay.
 It may not be !—this dizzy trance—
 Curse on you base marauder's lance,
 And doubly cursed my failing brand !
 A sinful heart makes feeble hand.”—
 Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
 Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
 And strove to staunch, the gushing wound :
 The Monk, with unavailing cares,
 Exhausted all the Church's prayers ;
 Ever, he said, that, close and near,
 A lady's voice was in his ear,
 And that the priest he could not hear,
 For that she ever sung,
*" In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying !"*
 So the notes rung ;
 " Avoid thee, Fiend !—with cruel hand,
 Shake not the dying sinner's sand !—
 O look, my son, upon yon sign
 Of the Redeemer's grace divine ;
 O think on faith and bliss !—
 By many a death-bed I have been,
 And many a sinner's parting seen,
 But never aught like this."—
 The war, that for a space did fail,
 Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
 And—STANLEY ! was the cry ;—
 A light on Marmion's visage spread,
 And fired his glazing eye :
 With dying hand, above his head
 He shook the fragment of his blade,
 And shouted " Victory !—
 " Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on !" . . .
 Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
 For still the Scots, around their king,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor vaward wing,
 Where Huntley, and where Home ?—
 O for a blast of that dread horn,
 On Fontarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,
 When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,

On Róncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils and bleeds and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
“O Lady,” cried the Monk, “away!”—
And placed her on her steed;
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And, at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hailed,
In headlong charge their horse assailed:
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep,
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their king.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men plie the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;—
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shattered bands;

And from the charge they drew,
 As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foemen know ;
 Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
 They melted from the field as snow,
 When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.
 Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disordered, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land ;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
 Shall many an age that wail prolong :
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield !

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side :—
 There, Scotland ! lay thy bravest pride,
 Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one ;
 The sad survivors all are gone.—
 View not that corpse mistrustfully,
 Defaced and mangled though it be ;
 Nor to yon Border castle high
 Look northward with upbraiding eye ;
 Nor cherish hope in vain,
 That, journeying far on foreign strand,
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness wrought ;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain :*

* There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey ; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were



He saw the wreck his rashness wrought:
Useless, of life, the desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain:



And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clenched within his manly hand,
 Beseemed the monarch slain.
 But, O ! how changed since you blythe night !—
 Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale :—Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
 And there, beneath the southern aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.
 (Now vainly for its site you look ;
 'Twas levelled, when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral stormed and took ;*
 But, thanks to heaven, and good Saint Chad,
 A guerdon meet the spoiler had !)
 There erst was martial Marmion found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised ;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so fair,
 And priests for Marmion breathed the prayer,
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
 Followed his lord to Flodden plain,—

killed ; a circumstance that testifies the desperation of their resistance. The Scottish historians record many of the idle reports which passed among the vulgar of their day. Home was accused, by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the king, but even of having carried him out of the field, and murdered him. Other reports gave a still more romantic turn to the king's fate, and averred, that James, weary of greatness after the carnage among his nobles, had gone on a pilgrimage to merit absolution for the death of his father, and the breach of his oath of amity to Henry.

* This storm of Lichfield cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the king, took place in the great civil war. Lord Brook, who, with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket ball through the visor of his helmet. The royalists remarked, that he was killed by a shot fired from St Chad's Cathedral, and upon St Chad's day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which, he had said, he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England.

One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
 In Scotland mourns as "wede away :"
 Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
 And dragged him to its foot, and died,
 Close by the noble Marmion's side.
 The spoilers stripped and gashed the slain,
 And thus their corpses were mista'en ;
 And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
 They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
 But every mark is gone ;
 Time's wasting hand has done away
 The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
 And broke her font of stone :
 But yet from out the little hill
 Oozes the slender springlet still.
 Oft halts the stranger there,
 For thence may best his curious eye
 The memorable field descry ;
 And shepherd boys repair
 To seek the water-flag and rush,
 And rest them by the hazel bush,
 And plait their garlands fair ;
 Nor dream they sit upon the grave,
 That holds the bones of Marmion brave.--
 When thou shalt find the little hill,
 With thy heart commune, and be still.
 If ever, in temptation strong,
 Thou left'st the right path for the wrong ;
 If every devious step, thus trode,
 Still led thee farther from the road ;
 Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom,
 On noble Marmion's lowly tomb ;
 But say, " He died a gallant knight,
 With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
 Who cannot image to himself,

That all through Flodden's dismal night,
 Wilton was foremost in the fight ;
 That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
 'Twas Wilton mounted him again ;
 'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hewed,
 Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood :
 Unmanned by Hollinshed or Hall,
 He was the living soul of all ;
 That, after fight, his faith made plain,
 He won his rank and lands again ;
 And charged his old paternal shield
 With bearings won on Flodden field.—
 Nor sing I to that simple maid,
 To whom it must in terms be said,
 That king and kinsmen did agree,
 To bless fair Clara's constancy ;
 Who cannot, unless I relate,
 Paint to her mind the bridal's state ;
 That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke ;
 More, Sands, and Denny, passed the joke :
 That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking threw ;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,
 In blessing to a wedded pair,
 " Love they like Wilton and like Clare !"

L'ENVOY.

TO THE READER.

Why then a final note prolong,
 Or lengthen out a closing song,
 Unless to bid the gentles speed,
 Who long have list'd to my rede ?*—
 To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
 To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
 Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
 And patriotic heart—as PITT !
 A garland for the hero's crest,
 And twined by her he loves the best

* Used generally for *tale*, or *discourse*.

To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow soft to head of age.
To thee, dear schoolboy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light.

XIX.

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the north.
One only passion, unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
Oh need I tell that passion's name?

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—
"Father!" she cried—the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came—
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid alarmed, with hasty oar,
Pushed her light shallop from the shore.

And, when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen ;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens went to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth,
And fiery vehemence of youth ;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports, or contest bold ;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trod the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road :
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy ;
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed.
And, reassured, at last replied,
That highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
" Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home,
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you ;

On yonder mountain's purple head
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
 And our broad nets have swept the mere,
 To furnish forth your evening cheer."
 "Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
 Your courtesy has erred," he said;
 'No right have I to claim, misplaced,
 The welcome of expected guest.
 A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
 My way, my friends, my courser lost,
 I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
 Have ever drawn your mountain air,
 Till on this lake's romantic strand.
 I found a fay in fairy land."

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
 As her light skiff approached the side—
 "I well believe, that ne'er before
 Your foot has trod Loch-Katrine's shore;
 But yet, as far as yesternight,
 Old Allan-bane foretold your plight—
 A grey-haired sire, whose eye intent
 Was on the visioned future bent.*
 He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
 Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
 Painted exact your form and mien,
 Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
 That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
 That cap with heron's plumage trim,
 And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
 He bade that all should ready be,
 To grace a guest of fair degree;
 But light I held his prophecy,
 And deemed it was my father's horn,
 Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.

* A superstitious belief in *second sight* prevailed in the Highlands: it was called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishalren*, which may be aptly translated visionaries. They pretended to see visions, and to be informed of future events which obtained for them an extraordinary influence over their countrymen.

XXIV.

The Stranger smiled :—" Since to your home,
 A destined errant knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
 I'll lightly front each high emprise,
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes ;
 Permit me, first, the task to guide
 Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
 The maid, with smile suppressed and sly
 The toil unwonted saw him try ;
 For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
 His noble hand had grasped an oar :
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
 And o'er the lake the shallop flew ;
 With heads erect and whimpering cry,
 The hounds behind their passage ply.
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break
 The darkening mirror of the lake,
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The Stranger viewed the shore around ;
 'Twas all so close with copse-wood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there,
 Until the mountain-maiden showed
 A clambering unsuspected road,
 That winded through the tangled screen,
 And opened on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round
 With their long fibres swept the ground.
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.*

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
 But strange of structure and device ;

* In these turbulent times the Celtic chieftain had usually some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and secluded situation.

Of such materials, as around
 The workman's hand had readiest found.
 Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
 And by the hatchet rudely squared,
 To give the walls their destined height,
 The sturdy oak and ash unite ;
 While moss, and clay, and leaves combined
 To fence each crevice from the wind.
 The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
 Their slender length for rafters spread,
 And withered heath and rushes dry
 Supplied a russet canopy.
 Due westward, fronting to the green,
 A rural portico was seen,
 Aloft on native pillars borne,
 Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
 Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
 The ivy and Idæan vine,
 The clematis, the favoured flower,
 Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
 And every hardy plant could bear
 Loch-Katrine's keen and searching air.
 An instant in this porch she staid,
 And gaily to the stranger said,
 "On heaven and on thy lady call,
 And enter the enchanted hall !"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
 My gentle guide, in following thee."
 He crossed the threshold—and a clang
 Of angry steel that instant rang.
 To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
 But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
 When on the floor he saw displayed,
 Cause of the din, a naked blade
 Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
 Upon a stag's huge antlers swung ;
 For all around, the walls to grace,
 Hung trophies of the fight or chase
 A target there, a bugle here,
 A battle-axe, a hunting spear,

And broad-swords, bows, and arrows store,
 With the tusked trophies of the boar.
 Here grins the wolf as when he died,
 And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
 The frontlet of the elk adorns,
 Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
 Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
 That blackening streaks of blood retained,
 And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
 With otter's fur and seal's unite,
 In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
 To garnish forth the syivan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering Stranger round him gazed,
 And next the fallen weapon raised;
 Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
 Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
 And as the brand he poised and swayed,
 "I never knew but one," he said,
 "Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
 A blade like this in battle field."
 She sighed, then smiled and took the word;
 "You see the guardian champion's sword:
 As light it trembles in his hand,
 As in my grasp a hazel wand;
 My sire's tall form might grace the part
 Of Ferragus, or Ascabart;*
 But in the absent giant's hold
 Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
 Mature of age, a graceful dame;
 Whose easy step and stately port
 Had well become a princely court,
 To whom, though more than kindred knew,
 Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
 Meet welcome to her guest she made,
 And every courteous rite was paid,

* The first of these giants is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was slain by him in single combat. Ascabart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the History of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered.

That hospitality could claim,
 Though all unasked his birth and name.*
 Such then the reverence to a guest,
 That fellest foe might join the feast,
 And from his deadliest foeman's door
 Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
 At length his rank the Stranger names—
 "The knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James;
 Lord of a barren heritage,
 Which his brave sires, from age to age,
 By their good swords had held with toil;
 His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
 And he, God wot, was forced to stand
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.
 This morning with Lord Moray's train
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
 Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
 Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
 The name and state of Ellen's sire;
 Well showed the elder lady's mien,
 That courts and cities she had seen;
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed
 The simple grace of sylvan maid,
 In speech and gesture, form and face,
 Show'd she was come of gentle race;
 'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdown gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turned all inquiry light away.
 "Wierd women we! by dale and down,
 We dwell afar from tower and town.
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;

* This refers to the practice which existed of never asking a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment; as the feuds which were so frequent among them, might have excluded the guest from the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of, if a contrary rule had been allowed.

While viewless minstrels touch the string,
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
 She sang, and still a harp unseen
 Filled up the symphony between.*

XXXI.

SONG.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall,
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more;
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
 Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
 Trump nor pibroch summon here
 Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
 Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
 At the daybreak from the fallow,
 And the bittern sound his drum,
 Booming from the sedgy shallow.
 Ruder sounds shall none be near,
 Guards nor warders challenge here,
 Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
 Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
 To grace the stranger of the day;
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong
 The cadence of the flowing song,
 Till to her lips in measured frame
 The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

* The highlanders delighted much in music, and harpers were received as welcome guests, in the highlands of Scotland, until the end of the sixteenth century.



The hall was cleared - the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.

SONG—*continued.*

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
 Dream not, with the rising sun,
 Bugles here shall sound reveille.
 Sleep! the deer is in his den;
 Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying,
 Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
 How thy gallant steed lay dying.
 Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 Think not of the rising sun,
 For at dawning to assail ye,
 Here no bugles sound reveille."

XXXIII.

The hill was cleared—the Stranger's bed
 Was there of mountain heather spread,
 Where oft an hundred guests had lain,
 And dreamed their forest sports again.
 But vainly did the heath-flower shed
 Its moorland fragrance round his head;
 Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
 The fever of his troubled breast.
 In broken dreams the image rose
 Of varied perils, pains, and woes
 His steed now flounders in the brake,
 Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
 Now leader of a broken host,
 His standard falls, his honour's lost.
 Then—from my couch may heavenly might
 Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
 Again returned the scenes of youth,
 Of confident, undoubting truth;
 Again his soul he interchanged
 With friends whose hearts were long estranged;
 They come, in dim procession led,
 The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
 As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
 As if they parted yesterday.
 And doubt distracts him at the view,
 Oh, were his senses false or true!

Dreamed he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now!

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove,
He seemed to walk, and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh;
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp;
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high.
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wafted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse—
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:--
"Why is it at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?"

CANTO II.] THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?—
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orison said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.”
His midnight orison he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sank in undisturbed repose;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Ben-venue.

CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
’Tis morning prompts the linnet’s blythest lay,
All nature’s children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn’s genial influence roused a Minstrel grey,*
And sweetly o’er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix’d with the sounding harp, oh white-haired Allan
bane!

II.

SONG.

“Not faster yonder rowers’ might
Flings from their oars the spray,

* Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service the bard, as a family officer. The bard was the historian and genealogist of the clan, besides being the domestic musician of the chief, and sometimes the preceptor of the young laird.

Not faster yonder, rippling bright,
 That tracks the shallop's course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days;
 Then, Stranger, go! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

“ High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battled line,
 Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
 Where Beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honoured meed be thine!
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love's and friendship's smile,
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

SONG—*continued.*

“ But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye.
 Pine for his highland home;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
 Remember then thy hap ere while
 A stranger in the lonely isle.

“ Or if on life's uncertain main
 Mishap shall mar thy sail;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
 Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
 Beneath the fickle gale;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile
 To greet thee in the lonely isle.”

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 The shallop reached the main-land side,

And ere his onward way he took,
 The Stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree,
 As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
 As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seemed watching the awakening fire;
 So still he sate, as those who wait
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
 So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair;
 So still as life itself were fled,
 In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vexed spaniel, from the beach,
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
 Yet tell me then the maid who knows,
 Why deepened on her cheek the rose?—
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loitered on the spot,
 It seemed as Ellen marked him not,
 But when he turned him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day

Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell,
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 "Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
 'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said;
 "Not so had Malcolm idly hung
 On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
 Another step than thine to spy."
 "Wake, Allan-bane!" aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side,
 "Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme."
 Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed,
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 "Vainly thou bidd'st, oh noble maid!"
 Clasping his withered hands, he said,
 "Vainly thou bidd'st me wake the strain,
 Though all unwont to bid in vain.

* This ancient and powerful family held extensive possessions in the counties of Dunbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted compatriot of Wallace, who fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realized his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity. And, John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, who fell in the arms of victory.

Alas! than mine a mightier hand
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned;
 I touch the chords of joy, but low
 And mournful answer notes of woe;
 And the proud march which victors tread,
 Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
 Oh well for me, if mine alone
 That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
 If, as my tuneful fathers said,
 This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,
 Can thus its master's fate foretell,
 Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
 The eve thy sainted mother died;
 And such the sounds which, while I strove
 To wake a lay of war or love,
 Came marring all the festal mirth,
 Appalling me who gave them birth,
 And, disobedient to my call,
 Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
 Ere Douglasses to ruin driven,
 Were exiled from their native heaven.*
 Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe
 My master's house must undergo,
 Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
 Brood in these accents of despair,
 No future bard, sad harp! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string;
 One short, one final strain shall flow,
 Fraught with unutterable woe,
 Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die."

* The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus, during the reign of James V. 1524, is the event alluded to in the text. The Earl of Angus, had married the queen Dowager, and availing himself of the right which he thus acquired, as well as of his extensive power, he retained the king in a sort of tutelage, which approached very near to captivity. This treatment so exasperated the youthful and chivalrous king that when he effected his escape to Stirling Castle, he swore in his anger—that no Douglas should, while he lived and reigned, find favour or countenance in Scotland—and he followed out his revenge, with such an inveterate hatred, that even their nearest friends, in the remotest parts of Scotland durst not entertain them unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

IX.

Soothing she answered him, " Assuage,
 Mine honoured friend, the fears of age;
 All melodies to thee are known,
 That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
 In lowland vale, or highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, *then,*
 At times, unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song?
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resigned,
 Than yonder oak might give the wind;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me"—she stooped, and, looking round,
 Plucked a blue hare-bell from the ground,
 " For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower, that loves the lea,
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows,
 And when I place it in my hair,
 Allan, a bard is bound to swear
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreathed in her dark locks, and *smiled.*

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
 Wiled the old harper's mood away.
 With such a look as hermits throw
 When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
 He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:—
 " Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honours thou hast lost!

Oh might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
 To see my favourite's step advance,
 The lightest in the courtly dance,
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"*

XI.

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,
 (Light was her accent, yet she sighed,)
 "Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footstep spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine;
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye,
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
 A Lennox foray—for a day."

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repressed:
 "Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
 In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;†
 I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
 Courtiers give place before the stride
 Of the undaunted homicide;
 And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
 Full sternly kept his mountain land.

* The well-known cognizance of the Douglas family.

† This was no uncommon occurrence in the court of Scotland; and even the royal presence scarcely restrained the ferocious feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility.

Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
 That I such hated truth should say—
 The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
 Disowned by every noble peer,
 Even the rude refuge we have here
 Alas, this wild marauding chief
 Alone might hazard our relief,
 And now thy maiden charms expand,
 Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
 Full soon may dispensation sought,
 To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
 Then, though an exile on the hill,
 Thy father, as the Douglas, still
 Be held in reverence and fear.
 But though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
 That thou might'st guide with silken thread
 Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
 Yet, oh loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
 Thy hand is on a lion's mane."

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
 Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
 "My debts to Roderick's house I know:
 All that a mother could bestow,
 To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
 Since first an orphan in the wild
 She sorrowed o'er her sister's child
 To her brave chieftain son, from ire
 Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
 A deeper, holier debt is owed;
 And, could I pay it with my blood,
 Allan! Sir Roderick should command
 My blood, my life—but not my hand.
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
 A votaress in Maronan's cell;*
 Rather through realms beyond the sea,
 Seeking the world's cold charity,
 Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word
 And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,

* The parish of Kilmarnock, at the eastern extremity of Loch-Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronoch, or Maronan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered.

An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

“Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses grey—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;*
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport chafe his blood :
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand :
But oh ! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel :
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand, that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought ;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughtered in their shed ?
No ! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe—
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume ;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air ;
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish ! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest ?”

* This is a beautiful cascade made at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn, by a mountain stream called the Keltie, about a mile from the village of Callander, in Menteith.

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,*
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self unscabbarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe.†
 If courtly spy, and harboured here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deemed of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say!
 —Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
 Bethink thee of the discord dread,
 That kindled when at Beltane game,
 Thou ledd'st the dance with Malcolm Græme;
 Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
 Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
 Still is the canna's‡ hoary beard,
 Vet, by my minstrel faith, I heard,
 And hark again! some pipe of war
 Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
 Four darkening specks upon the tide,
 That, slow enlarging on the view,
 Four manned and masted barges grew,

* Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of *TINEMAN*, because he *tined* or lost his followers in every battle which he fought. He was made prisoner by Hotspur in the bloody battle of Homildon-hill near Wooler, and he afterwards fell at the battle of Verneuil with the flower of the Scottish chivalry, then serving as auxiliaries in France, and about two thousand common soldiers, A.D. 1424.

† It was a superstitious belief, that enchanted swords possessed the power of leaping out of their scabbards, to indicate the presence of an enemy.

‡ Cotton-grass

And bearing downwards from Glengyle,
 Steered full upon the lonely isle ;
 The point of Brianchoil they passed,
 And, to the windward as they cast,
 Against the sun they gave to shine
 The bold Sir Roderick's bannered pine.
 Nearer and nearer as they bear,
 Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
 Now might you see the tartans brave,
 And plaids and plumage dance and wave ;
 Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
 As his tough oar the rower plies ;
 See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
 The wave ascending into smoke ;
 See the proud pipers on the bow,
 And mark the gaudy streamers flow
 From their loud chanters* down, and sweep
 The furrowed bosom of the deep,
 As, rushing through the lake amain,
 They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
 And louder rung the pibroch proud.†
 At first the sounds, by distance tame,
 Mellowed along the waters came,
 And, lingering long by cape and bay,
 Wailed every harsher note away ;
 Then, bursting bolder on the ear,
 The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear ;
 Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
 Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
 Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
 The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
 And, hurrying at the signal dread,
 The battered earth returns their tread.

* The drone of the bagpipe.

† The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, fight, pursuit, and all the "current of a heady fight." It began with a grave motion, resembling a march ; then gradually quickened into the onset ; ran off with noisy confusion, and turbulent rapidity, to imitate the conflict and pursuit ; then swelled into a few flourishes of triumphant joy ; and perhaps closed with the wild and slow wailings of a funeral procession.

Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
 Expressed their merry marching on,
 Ere peal of closing battle rose,
 With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
 And mimic din of stroke and ward,
 As broad-sword upon target jarred:
 And groaning pause, ere yet again,
 Condensed, the battle yelled amain;
 The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
 Retreat borne headlong into rout,
 And bursts of triumph, to declare
 Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
 Nor ended thus the strain; but slow,
 Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
 And changed the conquering clarion swell,
 For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
 Were busy with their echoes still;
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain
 Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud an hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burthen bore,
 In such wild cadence, as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless trees.
 The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
 And near, and nearer as they rowed,
 Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the chief who in triumph advances!
 Honoured and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
 Long may the Tree in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every highland glen

Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !"*
 Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade ;
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
 mountain,
 'The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moored in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow ;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
 And Banachar's groans to our slogan replied ;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on her side.†
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe ;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !"
 Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands !
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine !
 Oh ! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine

* Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in his intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and commonly another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as *dhu* or *roy* ; sometimes from size, as *beg* or *more* ; at other times, from some particular exploit, or from some peculiarity of habit or appearance. The line of the text therefore signifies,

Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine.

† The Lennox, as the district is called which encircles the lower extremity of Loch-Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighbouring district of Loch-Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity.

Oh that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honoured and blessed in their shadow might grow!
 Loud should Clan-Alpine then
 Ring from her deepmost glen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back with shrill acclaim
 And chorus wild the chieftain's name;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
 The darling passion of his heart,
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land;
 "Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreath a victor's brow?"
 Reluctantly and slow, the maid
 The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
 And, when a distant bugle rung,
 In the mid-path aside she sprung:
 "List, Allan-bane! from mainland cast,
 I hear my father's signal blast.
 Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
 And waft him from the mountain side."
 Then, like a sunbeam swift and bright,
 She darted to her shallop light.
 And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
 For her dear form, his mother's band,
 The islet far behind her lay,
 And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
 With less of earth in them than heaven;
 And if there be a human tear
 From passion's dross refined and clear
 A tear so limpid and so meek,
 It would not stain an angel's cheek,

'Tis that which pious fathers shed
 Upon a duteous daughter's head!
 And as the Douglas to his breast
 His darling Ellen closely pressed,
 Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,
 Though 'twas an hero's eye that weep'd.
 Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
 Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
 Marked she, that fear (affection's proof)
 Still held a graceful youth aloof; -
 No! not till Douglas named his name,
 Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
 Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
 His master piteously he eyed,
 Then gazed upon the chieftain's pride,
 Then dashed, with hasty hand, away
 From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
 And Douglas, as his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,
 "Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
 In my poor follower's glistening eye?
 I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,
 When in my praise he led the lay
 O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
 While many a minstrel answered loud,
 When Percy's Norman pennon, won
 In bloody field, before me shone,
 And twice ten knights, the least a name
 As mighty as yon chief may claim,
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
 Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
 Though the waned crescent owned my might,
 And in my train trooped lord and knight,
 Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.

Forgive, my friend, a father's boast;
Oh! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV.

Delightful praise!—like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared—
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide:
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the Wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail,
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue;
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer;
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess

His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind ;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame ;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "Oh my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why"—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war ;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor strayed I safe ; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risky life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps not unpursued ;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Èndrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, nor in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.

In talk and sport they whiled away
 The morning of that summer day;
 But at high noon a courier light
 Held secret parley with the knight,
 Whose moody aspect soon declared,
 That evil were the news he heard.
 Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
 Yet was the evening banquet made,
 Ere he assembled round the flame,
 His mother, Douglas, and the Græme
 And Ellen too; then cast around
 His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
 As studying phrase that might avail
 Best to convey unpleasant tale.
 Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
 Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII.

“Short be my speech; nor time affords,
 Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
 Kinsman and father—if such name
 Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
 Mine honoured mother; Ellen—why,
 My cousin, turn away thine eye?
 And Græme; in whom I hope to know
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,
 When age shall give thee thy command,
 And leading in thy native land—
 List all! The King's vindictive pride
 Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
 Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
 To share their monarch's sylvan game,
 Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
 And when the banquet they prepared,

* In 1529, James V., determined to extirpate the Border robbers, who, during his minority, had committed many excesses, assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick forest, hanged over the gate of his own castle Piers Cockburn of Henderland, and caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border, and the noted John Armstrong of Gilnockie, to be executed. The effect of this severity was such, that, as the vulgar expressed it, “the rush bush kept the cow.”

And wide their loyal portals flung,
 O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
 Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
 From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
 Where the lone streams of Ettricke glide,
 And from the silver Teviot's side;
 The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
 So faithless, and so ruthless known,
 Now hither comes; his end the same,
 The same pretext of sylvan game.
 What grace for Highland chiefs judge ye,
 By fate of Border chivalry.*
 Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
 Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
 This by espial sure I know:
 Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
 Sought comfort in each other's eye,
 Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
 This to her sire, that to her son.
 The hasty colour went and came
 In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
 But, from his glance it well appeared,
 'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;
 While sorrowful, but undismay'd,
 The Douglas thus his counsel said:—
 " Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
 It may but thunder and pass o'er;
 Nor will I here remain an hour,
 To draw the lightning on thy bower;
 For well thou know'st, at this grey head
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
 For thee, who, at thy King's command,
 Canst aid him with a gallant band,

* James was, in fact, attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression not only upon the Border, but also in the highlands and the isles, many of the chief men of which he detained as hostages for the behaviour of their vassals.

Submission, homage, humbled pride,
 Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
 Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
 Ellen and I will seek, apart,
 The refuge of some forest cell ;
 There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
 Till, on the mountain and the moor,
 The stern pursuit be passed and o'er."

XXX.

"No, by mine honour !" Roderick said,
 "So help me heaven, and my good blade !
 No, never ! Blasted be yon pine,
 My fathers' ancient crest, and mine,
 If from its shade in danger part
 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart !
 Hear my blunt speech. Grant me this main
 To wife, thy counsel to mine aid ;
 To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
 Will friends and allies flock enow ;
 Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
 Will bind to us each Western Chief.
 When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
 The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
 The guards shall start in Stirling's porch ;
 And when I light the nuptial torch,
 A thousand villages in flames,
 Shall scare the slumbers of King James.
 --Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
 And, mother, cease these sighs, I pray ;
 I meant not all my heat might say.
 Small need of inroad, or of fight,
 When the sage Douglas may unite
 Each mountain clan in friendly band,
 To guard the passes of their land,
 Till the foiled King, from pathless glen,
 Shall bootless turn him home agen."

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
 In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
 And, on the verge that beetled o'er
 The ocean-tide's incessant roar,

Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
 Till wakened by the morning beam;
 When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
 Such startler cast his glance below,
 And saw unmeasured depth around,
 And heard unintermitted sound,
 And thought the battled fence so frail,
 It waved like cobweb in the gale;
 Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
 Did he not desperate impulse feel,
 Headlong to plunge himself below,
 And meet the worst his fears foreshow
 Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
 As sudden ruin yawned around,
 By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
 Still for the Douglas fearing most,
 Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
 To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
 In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
 And eager rose to speak—but ere
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
 Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
 Where death seemed combating with life.
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
 One instant rushed the throbbing blood
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
 Left its domain as wan as clay.
 "Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,
 "My daughter cannot be thy bride;
 Not that the blush to wooer dear,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be—forgive her, chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.
 'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand.
 I see him yet, the princely boy!
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy;

I love him still, despite my wrongs,
 By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
 Oh seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode,
 The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darkened brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Dæmon of the night,
 Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
 But, unrequited Love! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
 At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
 While eyes, that mocked at tears before,
 With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
 Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud,
 Convulsive heaved its chequered shroud,
 While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.
 The son's despair, the mother's look,
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
 She rose, and to her side there came,
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
 To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:—
 "Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
 "Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at naught
 The lesson I so lately taught?"

This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
 Thank thou for punishment delayed."
 Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
 "Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its chieftain safety, save his sword!"
 Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
 Griped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!
 I hold the first who strikes, my foe.
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
 What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
 His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
 Of such dishonourable broil!"
 Sullen and slowly, they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
 As faltered through terrific dream.
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veiled his wrath in scornful word.
 "Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air!"
 Then may'st thou to James Stuart tell,
 Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
 Nor lackey, with his free-born clan,
 The pageant pomp of earthly man.
 More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
 Thou canst our strength and passes show.
 Malise, what ho?"—his henchman† came;
 "Give our safe conduct to the Græme."

* Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander, that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter which could be thrown upon him.

† This officer who was a sort of secretary, was to be ready, upon all occasions, to venture his life in defence of his master. At drinking-bouts he stood behind his chieftain's seat, at his baunch, from whence his title was derived.

Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold,
 "Fear nothing for thy favourite hold.
 The spot, an angel deigned to grace,
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place;
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes,
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight, as in blaze of day,
 Though, with his boldest at his back,
 Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.
 Brave Douglas—lovely Ellen—nay,
 Nought here of parting will I say.
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
 So secret, but we meet agen.
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"
 He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the strand,
 (Such was the Douglas's command,)
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
 Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
 Much were the peril to the Gràme,
 From those who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
 Himself would row him to the strand.
 He gave his counsel to the wind,
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
 Round dirk and pouch and broad-sword rolled,
 His ample plaid in tightened fold,
 And stripped his limbs to such array
 As best might suit the watery way.

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt:—"Farewell to thee,
 Pattern of old fidelity!"
 The minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,
 "Oh! could I point a place of rest!
 My sovereign holds in ward my land,
 My uncle leads my vassal band:

To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade :
 Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
 Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
 Not long shall honoured Douglas dwell,
 Like hunted stag, in mountain cell:
 Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare—
 I may not give the rest to air!—
 Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
 Not the poor service of a boat,
 To waft me to yon mountain side;”
 Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
 Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
 And stoutly steered him from the shore;
 And Allan strained his anxious eye,
 Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
 Darkening across each puny wave,
 To which the moon her silver gave.
 Fast as the cormorant could skim,
 The swimmer plied each active limb;
 Then landing in the moonlight dell,
 Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
 The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
 And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

The Gathering.

I.

Time rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore
 Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
 And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
 Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
 How are they blotted from the things that be!
 How few, all weak and withered of their force,
 Wait, on the verge of dark eternity,
 Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
 To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his cease-
 less course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
 How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
 Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
 And solitary heath, the signal knew;
 And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
 What time the warning note was keenly wound,
 What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
 While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering
 sound,
 And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor,
 round.*

II.

The summer dawn's reflected hue
 To purple changed Loch-Katrine blue;
 Mildly and soft the western breeze
 Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
 And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
 Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
 The mountain shadows on her breast
 Were neither broken nor at rest;
 In bright uncertainty they lie,
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
 The water lily to the light
 Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
 The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
 Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
 The grey mist left the mountain side,
 The torrent showed its glistening pride;
 Invisible in flecked sky,
 The lark sent down her revelry;
 The blackbird and the speckled thrush
 Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;

* When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon an emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, and also the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to the symbol inferred infamy. It was passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them, and at sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced by the bloody and burned marks upon this warlike signal.

In answer cooed the cushat dove,
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broad-sword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care,
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That Monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest
But Druid's, from the grave released.

Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
 On human sacrifice to look.
 And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
 Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er;
 The hallowed creed gave only worse
 And deadlier emphasis of curse.
 No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
 His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
 The eager huntsman knew his bound,
 And in mid chase called off his hound;
 Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
 The desert-dweller met his path,
 He prayed, and signed the cross between,
 While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.*
 His mother watched a midnight fold,
 Built deep within a dreary glen,
 Where scattered lay the bones of men,
 In some forgotten battle slain,
 And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
 It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
 To view such mockery of his art!
 The knot-grass fettered there the hand,
 Which once could burst an iron band;
 Beneath the broad and ample bone,
 That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
 A feeble and a timorous guest,
 The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
 There the slow blind-worm left his slime
 On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
 And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
 Still wreathed with chaplet flushed and full,
 For heath-bell, with her purple bloom,
 Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
 All night, in this sad glen, the maid
 Sate shrouded in her mantle's shade:
 —She said, no shepherd sought her side,
 No hunter's hand her snood untied,

* The legend which follows is not of the author's invention, being adopted in almost every particular, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane.

Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
 The virgin snood did Alice wear:*
 Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
 Her maiden girdle all too short,
 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
 Or holy church or blessed rite,
 But locked her secret in her breast,
 And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
 Was Brian from his infant years;
 A moody and heart-broken boy,
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 To wood and stream his hap to wail.
 Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain, the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind.
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells,
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride,
 Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

* The *snood*, or ribband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or *coif*, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood nor advanced to the graver dignity of the *curch*.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the Spectre's child.
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the river demon rise ;
 The mountain mist took form and limb
 Of noontide hag, or goblin grim ;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death :
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.
 One lingering sympathy of mind
 Still bound him to the mortal kind ;
 The only parent he could claim
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
 Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
 The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream ;*
 Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
 Of charging steeds, careering fast
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,
 Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride ; †
 The thunderbolt had split the pine—
 All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to show
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared—and from the rock,
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock

* Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or domestic spirit, either of male or female appearance, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings any approaching disaster. The Ben-Shie implies the female Fairy, whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families.

† A presage of this kind is still believed to announce death to the ancient highland family of McLean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.

Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
 A slender crosslet framed with care.
 A cubit's length in measure due ;
 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
 Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,*
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross, thus formed, he held on high,
 With wasted hand and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke.

IX.

"Woe to the clansman, who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew

On Alpine's dwelling low !

Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just

Shall doom him wrath and woe."

He paused—the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook ;

And first, in murmur low,

Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his mustered force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,

"Woe to the traitor, woe !"

* *Inch-Cailliach*, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch-Lomond. The burial ground there continues to be used, and contains the family places of sepulture of several families, claiming a descent from the old Scottish King Alpine.

Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle screamed afar—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
 The Monk resumed his muttered spell.
 Dismal and low its accents came,
 The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
 And the few words that reached the air
 Although the holiest name was there,
 Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
 But when he shook above the crowd
 Its kindled points, he spoke aloud :—
 "Woe to the wretch, who fails to rear
 At this dread sign the ready spear!
 For, as the flames this symbol sear,
 His home, the refuge of his fear,
 A kindred fate shall know ;
 Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
 Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
 While maids and matrons on his name
 Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
 And infamy and woe !"

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
 As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
 Denouncing misery and ill,
 Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
 Of curses stammered slow ;
 Answering, with imprecation dread,
 "Sunk be his home in embers red !
 And cursed be the meanest shed
 That e'er shall hide the houseless head
 We doom to want and woe !"
 A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
 Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave !
 And the grey pass where birches wave,
 On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
 And hard his labouring breath he drew,
 While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
 And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,

He meditated curse more dread,
 And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
 Who summoned to his Chieftain's aid,
 The signal saw and disobeyed.
 The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
 He quenched among the bubbling blood,
 And as again the sign he reared,
 Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard :
 " When flits this Cross from man to man,
 Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
 Burst be the ear that fails to heed !
 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed
 May ravens tear the careless eyes !
 Wolves make the coward heart their prize !
 As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
 So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth !
 As dies in hissing gore the spark,
 Quench thou his light, Destruction dark !
 And be the grace to him denied,
 Bought by this sign to all beside !"
 He ceased : no echo gave agen
 The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
 From Brian's hand the symbol took :
 " Speed, Malise, speed !" he said, and gave
 The crosslet to his henchman brave ;
 " The muster-place be Lanric mead—
 Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed !"
 Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
 A barge across Loch-Katrine flew ;
 High stood the henchman on the prow ;
 So rapidly the barge-men row,
 The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
 Were all unbroken and afloat,
 Dancing in foam and ripple still,
 When it had neared the mainland hill ;
 And from the silver beach's side
 Still was the prow three fathoms wide,
 When lightly bounded to the land,
 The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
 On fleeter foot was never tied.*
 Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
 Thine active sinews never braced.
 Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
 Burst down like torrent from its crest;
 With short and springing footsteps pass
 The trembling bog and false morass;
 Across the brook like roebuck bound,
 And thread the brake like questing hound;
 The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
 Yet shrink not from the desperate leap;
 Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
 Yet by the fountain pause not now;
 Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
 Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
 The wounded hind thou track'st not now
 Pursu'st not maid through greenwood bough,
 Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
 With rivals in the mountain race;
 But danger, death, and warrior deed
 Are in thy course—Speed, Malise, speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
 In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
 From winding glen, from upland brown,
 They poured each hardy tenant down.
 Nor slacked the messenger his pace;
 He showed the sign, he named the place,
 And, pressing forward like the wind,
 Left clamour and surprise behind.
 The fisherman forsook the strand,
 The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
 With changed cheer, the mower blithe
 Left in the half-cut swathe his scythe;
 The herds without a keeper strayed,
 The plough was in mid-furrow staid,

* The *brogue* or shoe of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of the undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards, a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of *red shanks*.

The falc'ner tossed his hawk away,
 The hunter left the stag at bay;
 Prompt at the signal of alarms,
 Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
 So swept the tumult and affray
 Along the margin of Achray.
 Alas, thou level lake! that e'er
 Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
 The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
 So stilly on thy bosom deep,
 The lark's blithe carol from the cloud,
 Seem: for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is past,
 Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
 And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
 Half hidden in the copse so green;
 There may'st thou rest, thy labour done,
 Their Lord shall speed the signal on.
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
 The henchman shot him down the way.
 —What woeful accents load the gale?
 The funeral yell, the female wail!
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
 A valiant warrior fights no more.
 Who, in the battle or the chase,
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
 Within the hall, where torch's ray
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
 The village maids and matrons round
 The dismal coronach* resound.

XVI.

CORONACH.

He is gone on the mountain,
 He is lost to the forest,

* The *Coronach* of the Highlanders, was a wild expression of lamentation poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend.

Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font, re-appearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory;
 The autumn winds rusning
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,*
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber!
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river,
 Like the bubble on the fountain,
 Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah,† who, the bier beside,
 His master's corpse with wonder eyed—
 Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
 Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
 Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
 As if some stranger step he hears.
 'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
 Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
 But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
 Urge the precipitate career.
 All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
 The henchman bursts into the hall!
 Before the dead man's bier he stood,
 Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood!
 "The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
 Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

* Or *corri*. The hollow side of the hill, where game usually
 lies

† *Faithful*. The name of a dog.

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprang forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broad-sword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu.
"Alas!" she sobbed—"and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep, to clear his labouring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when freed
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clan, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe, with hurried hand;
And short and fitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
 It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
 O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
 Not rest nor pause young Angus knew;
 The tear that gathered in his eye,
 He left the mountain breeze to dry;
 Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
 Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
 That graced the sable strath with green,
 The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
 Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
 But Angus paused not on the edge;
 Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
 Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
 He dashed amid the torrent's roar;
 His right hand high the crosslet bore,
 His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
 And stay his footing in the tide.
 He stumbled twice—the foam splashed high,
 With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
 And had he fallen—for ever there,
 Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
 But still, as if in parting life,
 Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
 Until the opposing bank he gained,
 And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
 Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
 To Norman, heir of Armandave,
 And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
 The bridal now resumed their march.
 In rude, but glad procession, came
 Bonnetted sire and coif-clad dame;
 And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
 Which snooded maiden would not hear;
 And children, that, unwitting why,
 Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
 And minstrels, that in measures vied
 Before the young and bonny bride,

Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom, by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the church-yard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
Oh fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brooks no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith
What in the racer's bosom stirred?
The sickening pang of hope deferred

And memory, with a torturing train
 Of all his morning visions vain.
 Mingled with love's impatience, came
 The manly thirst for martial fame;
 The stormy joy of mountaineers,
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
 And zeal for clan and chieftain burning,
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,
 With war's red honours on his crest,
 To clasp his Mary to his breast.
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,
 While high resolve, and feeling strong,
 Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

SONG.

The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken* curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far from love and thee, Mary;
 To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my bloody plaid,
 My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
 It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
 The grief that clouds thy lovely brow
 I dare not think upon thy vow,

 And all it promised me, Mary.
 No fond regret must Norman know;
 When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
 His heart must be like bended bow,
 His foot like arrow free, Mary!

A time will come with feeling fraught!
 For, if I fall in battle fought,
 Thy hapless lover's dying thought
 Shall be a thought on thee, Mary!
 And if returned from conquered foes,
 How blithely will the evening close,
 How sweet the linnets sing repose
 To my young bride and me, Mary!

* *Bracken*—Fern.

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
 Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,*
 Rushing in conflagration strong,
 Thy deep ravines and dells along,
 Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
 And reddening the dark lakes below;
 Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
 As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
 The signal roused to martial coil
 The sullen margin of Loch-Voil,
 Waked still Loch-Doine, and to the source
 Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
 Thence southward turned its rapid road
 Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
 Till rose in arms each man might claim
 A portion in Clan-Alpine's name;
 From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
 Could hardly buckle on his brand,
 To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,
 Mustered its little horde of men,
 That met as torrents from the height,
 In Highland dale their streams unite,
 Still gathering, as they pour along,
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong.
 Till at the rendezvous they stood
 By hundreds prompt for blows and blood;
 Each trained to arms since life began,
 Owning no tie but to his clan,
 No oath, but by his Chieftain's hand,†
 No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
 Surveyed the skirts of Ben-venue,

* The heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set on fire, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced in room of the tough old heather plants. This custom produces occasionally the most beautiful nocturnal appearance, similar almost to the discharge of a volcano.

† The deep and implicit respect paid by the highland clansmen to their chief, rendered this both a common and a solemn oath.

And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
 To view the frontiers of Menteith.
 All backward came with news of truce;
 Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
 In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch-Con;
 All seemed at peace. Now, wot ye why
 The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,
 This western frontier scanned with care?—
 In Ben-venue's most darksome cleft,
 A fair, though cruel pledge was left;
 For Douglas, to his promise true,
 That morning from the isle withdrew,
 And in a deep sequestered dell
 Had sought a low and lonely cell.
 By many a bard in Celtic tongue,
 Has Coir-nan-Uriskin* been sung;
 A softer name the Saxon gave,
 And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
 As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
 The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
 Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
 Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
 From Ben-venue's grey summit wild,
 And here, in random ruin piled,
 They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
 And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
 The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
 At noontide there a twilight made,

* This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Ben-venue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of Loch-Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil. The name signifies, the den of the shaggy men, and tradition has ascribed to the *urisk*, who gives name to the cavern, a figure between a goat and a man; in short, precisely that of the Grecian satyr.

Unless when short and sudden shone
 Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
 With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
 Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
 No murmur waked the solemn still,
 Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
 But when the wind chafed with the lake
 A sullen sound would upward break,
 With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
 The incessant war of wave and rock.
 Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
 Seemed nodding o'er the cavern grey.
 From such a den the wolf had sprung,
 In such the wild cat leaves her young;
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair,
 Sought, for a space, their safety there.
 Grey Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
 For there, she said, did fays resort,
 And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
 By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
 When Roderick, with a chosen few,
 Repassed the heights of Ben-venue.
 Above the Goblin-cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;*
 The prompt retainers speed before,
 To launch the shallop from the shore,
 For cross Loch-Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.
 Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,
 Unwonted sight, his men behind.
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 Alone attended on his lord;
 The rest their way through thickets break,
 And soon await him by the lake.

* Bealach-nam-Bo, or the pass of cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Cor-nan-Uriskin.

It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighbouring height,
 By the low-levelled sunbeam's light ;
 For strength and stature, from the clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man,
 As even afar might well be seen,
 By their proud step and martial mien.
 Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
 Their targets gleam, as by the boat
 A wild and warlike group they stand,
 That well became such mountain strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
 Was lingering on the craggy hill,
 Hard by where turned apart the road
 To Douglas's obscure abode.
 It was but with that dawning morn
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn,
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more ;
 But he who stems a stream with sand,
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,
 Has yet a harder task to prove—
 By firm resolve to conquer love !
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 Still hovering near his treasure lost ;
 For though his haughty heart deny
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But, hark ! what mingles in the strain ?
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,
 That wakes its measures slow and high,
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
 What melting voice attends the strings ?
 'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings !

XXIX.

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Ave Maria! maiden mild !
 Listen to a maiden's prayer ;

Thou canst hear though from the wild
 Thou canst save amidst despair.
 Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
 Though banished, outcast, and reviled—
 Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
 Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share,
 Shall seem with down of eider piled,
 If thy protection hover there.
 The murky cavern's heavy air
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer!
 Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.
 We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
 Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer!
 And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page, with humble sign,
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then, while his plaid he round him cast,
 "It is the last time—'tis the last"—
 He muttered thrice—"the last time e'er
 That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"
 It was a goading thought—his stride
 Hied hastier down the mountain side;
 Sullen he flung him in the boat,
 And instant cross the lake it shot.
 They landed in that siivery bay,
 And eastward held their hasty way,

Till, with the latest beams of light,
 The band arrived on Lanrick height,
 Where mustered in the vale below,
 Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made,
 Some sate, some stood, some slowly strayed;
 But most, with mantles folded round,
 Were couched to rest upon the ground,
 Scarce to be known by curious eye,
 From the deep heather where they lie,
 So well was matched the tartan screen
 With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
 Unless where, here and there, a blade,
 Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
 Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
 But, when, advancing through the gloom,
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
 Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
 Three times returned the martial yell.
 It died upon Bochart's plain,
 And Silence claimed her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Prophecy.

I.

"THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears,
 The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
 Oh wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years!"
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
 All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay
 For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark!—on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 "Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
 Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 "Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.
 "Apart, in yonder misty glade;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide."
 They called a slumberer by his side,
 And stirred him with his slackened bow—
 "Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
 We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
 Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
 "What of the foeman?" Norman said.
 "Varying reports from near and far;
 This certain—that a band of war
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command, to march from Doune;
 King James, the while, with princely powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?"
 "What! know ye not that Roderick's care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man

Unfit for arms? and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,
 But all beside the islet moor,
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?"

IV.

" 'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
 Bespeaks the father of his clan.
 But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
 Apart from all his followers true?"
 " It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried,
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm* called; by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew——"

MALISE.

" Ah! well the gallant brute I knew,
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
 But steep and flinty was the road,
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dennan's Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow."

V.

NORMAN.

" That bull was slain; his reeking hide
 They stretched the cataract beside,

* One of the most noted of the Highland modes of divination was the *Taghairm*. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a water-fall, or in some other wild, and unusual situation, where he revolved in his mind the question proposed, and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits which haunt these desolate recesses.

Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.*
 Couched on a shelve beneath its brink,
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
 Nor distant rests the Chief:—but hush!
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The Hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?†
 "Peace! peace! to other than to me,
 Thy words were evil augury;
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell
 Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
 The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
 Together they descend the brow."

VI.

And, as they came with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word:
 "Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
 For man endowed with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,

* There is a rock so named in the forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course.

† In cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking* the slaughtered stag, the forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also. "There is a little gristle," says Tuberville, "which is upon the spoone of the briske, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it, that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it."

Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance—
 'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
 The curtain of the future world.
 Yet witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
 This for my Chieftain have I borne!
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
 An human tongue may ne'er avouch
 No mortal man—save he, who, bred
 Between the living and the dead,
 Is gifted beyond nature's law,
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.
 At length the fateful answer came,
 In characters of living flame!
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
 But borne and branded on my soul;—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
'THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'*

VII.

--Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair.
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
 But first our broad-swords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
 A spy hath sought my land this morn,
 No eve shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside,
 Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
 He light on those shall bring him down.
 But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?"

* This was an augury frequently attended to. It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with the notion, that on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor, they murdered a defenceless herdsman, merely to secure this advantage.

VIII.

" At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive,
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And marked the sable pale of Mar."
 " By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on?" " To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune."
 " Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
 But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
 Strengthened by them we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch-Katriue's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire—
 Lover for maid beloved!—but why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
 Or dost thou come, ill-omen'd tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu;
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
 Each to his post!—all know their charge."
 The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broad-swords gleam, the banners dance,
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance
 I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
 And Ellen sits on the grey stone
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan;
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.

" He will return—dear lady, trust !—
 With joy return ; he will—he must !
 Well was it time to seek afar
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarms
 Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats, with many a light,
 Floating the live-long yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north ;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare ?"

X.

" No, Allan, no ! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his ; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears reports of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream,
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou said'st, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen aught ?
 Oh no ! 'twas apprehensive thought
 For the kind youth—for Roderick too—
 (Let me be just) that friend so true ;
 In danger both, and in our cause !
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
 Why else that solemn warning given,
 ' If not on earth we meet in heaven ?'

Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie and make me known?
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching woe!
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot,
 Of such a wond'rous tale I know—
 Dear lady, change that look of woe!
 My heart was wont thy grief to cheer ———"

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear."
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

BALLAD.

ALICE BRAND.*

Merry it is in the good green wood,
 When the mavis† and merle‡ are singing,

* This little fairy tale is founded upon a very curious Danish ballad, which occurs in the *KJEMPE VISER*, a collection of heroic songs, first published in 1591, and reprinted in 1695.

† Thrush.

‡ Blackbird.

When the deer sweeps by, and the bounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

“ Oh Alice Brand! my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do,

“ Oh Alice! 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

“ Now must I teach to hew the beech,
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“ And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer
To keep the cold away.”

“ Oh Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And Fortune sped the lance.

“ If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

“ And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

XIII.

BALLAD—*continued.*

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and the oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
 Who won'd within the hill—*
 Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
 His voice was ghostly shrill.

“Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
 Our moonlight circle's screen?
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
 Or who may dare on wold to wear
 The fairy's fatal green?†

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
 For thou wert christened man;‡
 For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
 For muttered word or ban.

“Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
 The curse of the sleepless eye;
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
 Nor yet find leave to die.”

XIV.

BALLAD—continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,
 Though the birds have stilled their singing;
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is faggots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf
 Before Lord Richard stands,
 And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
 “I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly elf,
 “That is made with bloody hands.”

* The *Daoine Shi*, or men of peace of the Highlanders, are believed to inhabit certain round grassy eminences, where they celebrate their nocturnal festivities by the light of the moon. Many, it is said, of mortal race have been entertained in their secret recesses; but unhappy is the mortal who joins in their joys, or ventures to partake of their dainties. By this indulgence, he forfeits for ever the society of men, and is bound down irrevocably to the condition of a *Shi'ich*, or man of peace.

† As the *daoine shi*, or men of peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour.

‡ The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power, a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction.

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear—
 “And if there’s blood upon his hand,
 ’Tis but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
 It cleaves unto his hand,
 The stain of thine own kindly blood,
 The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepp’d she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign—
 “And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.

“And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
 By Him whom Demons fear,
 To show us whence thou art thyself?
 And what thine errand here?”

XV.

BALLAD—*continued.*

“’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in Fairy-land,
 When fairy birds are singing,
 When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
 With bit and bridle ringing:

“And gaily shines the Fairy land—
 But all is glistening show,
 Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
 Can dart on ice and snow.

“And fading, like that varied gleam,
 Is our inconstant shape,
 Who now like knight and lady seem,
 And now like dwarf and ape.

“It was between the night and day,
 When the Fairy King has power,
 That I sank down in a sinful fray,
 And, ’twixt life and death, was snatched away
 To the joyless Elfin bower.*

* The subjects of Fairy-land were recruited from the regions of humanity, so that many of those who were in this world supposed to have discharged the debt of nature, had only become denizens of the “Londe of Faery.”

"But wist I of a woman bold,
 Who thrice my brow durst sign,
 I might regain my mortal mold
 As fair a form as thine."

She crossed him once—she crossed him **twice**—
 That lady was so brave;
 The fouler grew his goblin hue,
 The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold:
 He rose beneath her hand
 The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
 Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in the good green wood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,
 But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
 When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
 A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
 His martial step, his stately mien,
 His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 His eagle glance remembrance claims—
 'Tis Snowdoun's Knight—'tis James Fitz-James
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,
 Then starting, scarce suppressed a scream:
 "Oh stranger! in such hour of fear,
 What evil hap has brought thee here?"
 "An evil hap how can it be,
 That bids me look again on thee?
 By promise bound, my former guide
 Met me betimes this morning tide,
 And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
 The happy path of my return."
 "The happy path!—what! said he nought
 Of war, of battle to be fought,
 Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."
 "Oh haste thee, Allan, to the kern
 —Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure!—

What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him, to guide thee here."

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honour's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild,
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower——"
 "Oh! hush, Sir Knight! twere female art
 To say I do not read thy heart;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track
 And how, oh how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.
 Still would'st thou speak?—then hear the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
 If yet he is!—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart;
 Forgive, be generous, and depart."

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain,
 But here he knew and felt them vain.
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffered to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.
 "Oh! little knowest thou Roderick's heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 Oh haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou may'st trust yon wily kern."
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
 He paused, and turned, and came again.

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave,
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,
 Whose castle is his helm and shield,
 His lordship, the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither reck of state nor land?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
 Each guard and usher knows the sign.

Seek thou the king without delay;
 This signet shall secure thy way;
 And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
 As ransom of his pledge to me."
 He placed the golden circlet on,
 Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
 The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
 So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
 He joined his guide, and wending down
 The ridges of the mountain brown,
 Across the stream they took their way,
 That joins Loch-Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
 Sudden his guide whooped loud and high—
 "Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"
 He stammered forth—"I shout to scare
 Yon raven from his dainty fare."
 He looked—he knew the raven's prey,
 His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant grey!
 For thee—for me perchance—'twere well
 We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.
 Murdoch, move first—but silently;
 Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die."
 Jealous and sullen on they fared,
 Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
 Around a precipice's edge,
 When lo! a wasted female form,
 Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
 In tattered weeds and wild array,
 Stood on a cliff beside the way,
 And glancing round her restless eye
 Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
 Seemed nought to mark, yet all to spy.
 Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom:
 With gesture wild she waved a plume
 Of feathers, which the eagles fling
 To crag and cliff from dusky wing;

Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
 Where scarce was footing for the goat.
 The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shrieked, till all the rocks replied;
 As loud she laughed when near they drew,
 For then the lowland garb she knew;
 And then her hands she wildly wrung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung.
 She sung!—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
 And now, though strained and roughened, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

SONG.

“They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warped and wrung—
 I cannot sleep on highland brae,
 I cannot pray in highland tongue.
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devan’s tides,
 So sweetly would I rest and pray
 That heaven would close my wintery day!
 “’Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
 They bade me to the church repair;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there,
 But woe betide the cruel guile,
 That drowned in blood the morning smile!
 And woe betide the fairy dream!
 I only waked to sob and scream.”

XXIII.

“Who is this maid? what means her lay?
 She hovers o’er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle grey,
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o’er a haunted spring.”
 “’Tis Blanche of Devan,” Murdoch said,
 “A crazed and captive lowland maid,
 Ta’en on the morn she was a bride,
 When Roderick forayed Devan-side.

The gay bridegroom resistance made,
 And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge;
 Hence, brain-sick fool!" He raised his bow.
 "Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
 I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
 As ever peasant pitched a bar."
 "Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,
 And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
 "See the grey pennons I prepare,
 To seek my true-love through the air!
 I will not lend that savage groom,
 To break his fall, one downy plume!
 No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
 The wolves shall batten on his bones,
 And then shall his detested plaid,
 By bush and briar in mid-air staid,
 Wave forth a banner fair and free,
 Meet signal for their revelry."

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"
 "Oh! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
 But still it loves the Lincoln green;
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
 Still, still it loves the lowland tongue.

For oh my sweet William was forester true,
 He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
 And so blithely he trilled the lowland lay! . .

It was not that I meant to tell...
 But thou art wise, and guessest well."
 Then, in a low and broken tone,
 And hurried note, the song went on.
 Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
 She fixed her apprehensive eye;
 Then turned it on the Knight, and then
 Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

“The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,
 Ever sing merrily, merrily;
 The bows they bend, and the knives they whet
 Hunters live so cheerily.

“It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
 Bearing his branches sturdily;
 He came stately down the glen,
 Ever sing hardily, hardily.

“It was there he met with a wounded doe,
 She was bleeding deathfully;
 She warned him of the toils below,
 Oh so faithfully, faithfully!

“He had an eye, and he could heed,
 Ever sing warily, warily;
 He had a foot, and he could speed—
 Hunters watch so narrowly.”

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
 When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
 But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
 And Blanche's song conviction brought.
 Not like a stag that spies the snare,
 But lion of the hunt aware,
 He waved at once his blade on high,
 “Disclose thy treachery, or die!”
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
 But in his race his bow he drew:
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
 And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.
 Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
 For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
 The fierce avenger is behind!
 Fate judges of the rapid strife—
 The forfeit, death—the prize is life!
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,
 Close couched upon the heathery moor;

* Having ten branches on his antlers.

Them couldst thou reach—it may not be—
 Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
 The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
 Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
 As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
 With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
 Ere he can win his blade again.
 Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
 He grimly smiled to see him die;
 Then slower wended back his way
 Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen tree,
 Her elbow resting on her knee;
 She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
 And gazed on it, and feebly laughed
 Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
 Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
 The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried—
 "Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried;
 "This hour of death has given me more
 Of reason's power than years before;
 For, as these ebbing veins decay,
 My frenzied visions fade away.
 A helpless injured wretch I die,
 And something tells me in thine eye,
 That thou wert mine avenger born.
 Seest thou this tress? Oh! still I've worn
 This little tress of yellow hair,
 Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
 It once was bright and clear as thine,
 But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
 I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
 Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
 My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
 Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
 And thou will bring it me again.
 I waver still!—Oh God! more bright
 Let Reason beam her parting light!—
 Oh! by thy knighthood's honoured sign,
 And for thy life preserved by mine,

When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . Oh God! . . . farewell!"

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James,
 Fast poured his eye at pity's claims;
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 "God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"—
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet side:
 "By Him whose word is truth! I swear
 No other favour will I wear,
 Till this sad token I embrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
 The chase is up—but they shall know,
 The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
 Barred from the known but guarded way,
 Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
 And oft must change his desperate track,
 By stream and precipice turned back.
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
 From lack of food and loss of strength,
 He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
 And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
 "Of all my rash adventures past,
 This frantic feat will prove the last!
 Who e'er so mad but might have guess'd,
 That all this highland hornet's nest
 Would muster up in swarms so soon
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out—
 Hark, to the whistle and the shout!

If farther through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe ;
 I'll couch me here till evening grey,
 Then darkling try my dangerous way.

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
 The woods are wrapped in deeper brown,
 The owl awakens from her dell,
 The fox is heard upon the fell ;
 Enough remains of glimmering light
 To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
 Yet not enough from far to show
 His figure to the watchful foe.
 With cautious step, and ear awake,
 He climbs the crag and threads the brake ;
 And not the summer solstice, there,
 Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
 But every breeze that swept the wold,
 Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
 In dread, in danger, and alone,
 Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
 Tangled and steep, he journey'd on ;
 Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
 A watch-fire close before him burned.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
 Basked, in his plaid, a mountaineer ;
 And up he sprung with sword in hand—
 "Thy name and purpose ! Saxon, stand !"
 "A stranger." "What dost thou require ?"
 "Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
 My life's beset, my path is lost,
 The gale has chilled my limbs with frost."
 "Art thou a friend to Roderick !" "No."
 "Thou darrest not call thyself a foe ?"
 "I dare ! to him and all the band
 He brings to aid his murderous hand."
 "Bold words !—but, though the beast of game
 The privilege of chase may claim,
 Though space and law the stag we lend,
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,

Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapped or slain?*

Thus, treacherous scouts—yet sure they lie,
 Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!"

"They do, by Heaven! Come Roderick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,
 I write the falsehood on their crest."
 "If by the blaze I mark aright,
 Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."
 "Then, by these tokens may'st thou know,
 Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."
 "Enough, enough; sit down and share
 A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his highland cheer,
 The hardened flesh of mountain deer; †
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tended him like welcome guest,
 Then thus his further speech addressed:

"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
 A clansman born, a kinsman true;
 Each word against his honour spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke;
 Yet more—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid.
 It rests with me to wind my horn,
 Thou art with numbers overborne;
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
 But nor for clan nor kindred's cause,
 Will I depart from honour's laws:

* Saint John actually used this illustration when engaged in counting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford:—"It was true, we give laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey."

† The Scottish Highlanders, in former times, devoured their venison raw, without any further preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy

To assail a wearied man were shame,
 A stranger is a holy name ;
 Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
 In vain he never must require.
 Then rest thee here till dawn of day ;
 Myself will guide thee on the way,
 O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
 Till past Clan Alpine's outmost guard,
 As far as Coilantogle's ford—
 From thence thy warrant is thy sword."
 " I take thy courtesy, by Heaven,
 As freely as 'tis nobly given !"
 " Well, rest thee ; for the bittern's cry
 Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
 With that he shook the gathered heath.
 And spread his plaid upon the wreath ;
 And the brave foemen, side by side,
 Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
 And slept until the dawning beam
 Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Combat

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
 When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
 It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
 And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
 And lights the fearful path on mountain side ;
 Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
 Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
 Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
 Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow
 of war.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel screen,

CANTO V.] THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael* around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path! they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
An hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host,
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.

* The Scottish Highlander calls himself *Gael*, or *Gaul*, and terms the Lowlanders *Sassenach*, or Saxons.

But where the lake slept deep and still,
 Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
 And oft both path and hill were torn,
 Where wintry torrent down had borne,
 And heaped upon the cumbered land
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
 So toilsome was the road to trace,
 The guide, abating of his pace,
 Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
 And asked Fitz-James, by what strange cause
 He sought these wilds, traversed by few
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu?

IV.

"Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
 Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
 Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
 "I dreamed not now to claim its aid.
 When here, but three days since, I came,
 Bewildered in pursuit of game,
 All seemed as peaceful and as still,
 As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
 Thy dangerous chief was then afar,
 Nor soon expected back from war.
 Thus said, at least, my mountain guide,
 Though deep, perchance, the villain lied."
 "Yet why a second venture try?"
 "A warrior thou, and ask me why?
 Moves our free course by such fixed cause
 As gives the poor mechanic laws?
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day;
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide
 A knight's free footsteps far and wide,
 A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
 The merry glance of mountain maid;
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone."

V

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye nought of lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine raised by Mar?"

"No, by my word; of bands prepared
 To guard King James's sports I heard;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung."
 "Free be they flung!—for we were loth
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
 Bewildered in the mountain game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?"—
 "Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
 Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
 Yet this alone might from his part
 Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl.
 A space he paused, then sternly said—
 "And heard'st thou why he drew his blade
 Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
 What reck'd the Chieftain, if he stood
 On highland heath or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is given,
 If it were in the court of heaven."
 "Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
 Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
 While Albany, with feeble hand,
 Held borrowed truncheon of command.*
 The young king, maw'd in Stirling tower,
 Was stranger to respect and power.

* There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V.

But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
 Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
 Wrenching from ruin'd lowland swain
 His herds and harvest reared in vain—
 Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
 The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answered with disdainful smile—
 "Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I marked thee send delighted eye,
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,
 Deep waving fields and pastures green,
 With gentle slopes and groves between:—
 These fertile plains, that softened vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread,
 For fattened steer or household bread
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
 And well the mountain might reply—
 'To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the rest.'
 Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
 While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
 But one along yon river's maze—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.*

* The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach.

Where live the mountain chiefs who hold,
That plundering lowland field and fold
Is ought but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

VIII.

Answered Fitz-James—"And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid,
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"
"As of a need to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true—
I seek my hound, or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride;
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band."

IX.

"Have then thy wish!"—he whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets, and spears, and bended bows.
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprang up at once the lurking foe;

From shingles grey their lances start,
 The bracken-bush sends forth the dart,
 The rushes and the willow-wand
 Are bristling into axe and brand,
 And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior armed for strife.
 That whistle garrisoned the glen
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood and still.
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung,
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benedi's living side,
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
 And, Saxon—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—though to his heart
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
 He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
 Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before;—
 "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I!"
 Sir Roderick marked—and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foemen worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood—then waved his hand;
 Down sank the disappearing band;
 Each warrior vanished where he stood,
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood;

Sank brand and spear and bended bow,
 In osiers pale and copses low :
 It seemed as if their mother Earth
 Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
 The wind's last breath had tossed in air
 Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair—
 The next but swept a lone hill-side,
 Where heath and fern were waving wide,
 The sun's last glance was glinted back,
 From spear and glaive, from targe and jack—
 The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James looked round—yet scarce believed
 The witness that his sight received ;
 Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream.
 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
 And to his look the Chief replied,
 " Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
 But—doubt not aught from mine array.
 Thou art my guest ;—I pledged my word
 As far as Coilantogle ford :
 Nor would I call a clansman's brand
 For aid against one valiant hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
 So move we on ;—I only meant
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."
 They moved :—I said Fitz-James was brave
 As ever knight that belted glaive ;
 Yet dare not say, that now his blood
 Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
 As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
 That seeming lonesome pathway through,
 Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
 With lances, that to take his life
 Waited but signal from a guide,
 So late dishonoured and defied.

Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
 The vanished guardians of the ground,
 And still from copse and heather deep,
 Fancy saw spear and broad-sword peep,
 And in the plover's shrilly strain,
 The signal whistle heard again.
 Nor breathed he free till far behind
 The pass was left; for then they wind
 Along a wide and level green,
 Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
 Nor rush, nor bush of broom was near,
 To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
 And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
 Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
 From Vennachar in silver breaks,
 Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
 On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
 Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
 Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.*
 And here his course the Chieftain staid,
 Threw down his target and his plaid,
 And to the lowland warrior said:—
 "Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
 Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
 'Tis murderous chief, this ruthless man,
 'Tis head of a rebellious clan,
 Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
 Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
 Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
 A chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
 See, here, all vantageless I stand,
 Armed, like thyself, with single brand;
 For this is Coilantogle ford,
 And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

'The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delayed,
 When foeman bade me draw my blade;

* Upon a small eminence, called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments which have been thought Roman. There is adjacent to Callander a villa, entitled the Roman Camp.

Nay more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death;
 Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
 And my deep debt for life preserved,
 A better meed have well reserved:—
 Can nought but blood our feud atone?
 Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
 And hear—to fire thy flagging zeal—
 The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
 For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
 Between the living and the dead:
 'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
 His party conquers in the strife.'
 "Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
 "The riddle is already read.
 Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff—
 There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
 Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
 Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
 To James, at Stirling, let us go,
 When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
 Or if the King shall not agree
 To grant thee grace and favour free,
 I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
 That, to thy native strengths restored,
 With each advantage shalt thou stand,
 That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV.

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye—
 "Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
 Because a wretched kern ye slew,
 Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
 He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
 Thou add'st but fuel to my hate—
 My clansman's blood demands revenge.
 Not yet prepared? By heaven, I change
 My thought, and hold thy valour light
 As that of some vain carpet-knight,
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,
 And whose best boast is but to wear
 A braid of his fair lady's hair."
 "I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;

For I have sworn this braid to stain
 In the best blood that warms thy vein,
 Now, truce, farewell! and ruth, be gone!—
 Yet think not that by thee alone,
 Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast.
 But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each looked to sun, and stream, and plain,
 As what they ne'er might see again;
 Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw,*
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dashed aside;
 For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield,†
 He practised every pass and ward,
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintained unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,
 And thrice the Saxon sword drank blood—
 No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
 Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And showered his blows like wintry rain,
 And, as firm rock, a castle-roof,
 Against the winter shower is proof.

* A round target of light wood, covered with strong leateer, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. A person thus armed had a considerable advantage in private fray.

† The use of defensive armour, and particularly of the buckler or target, was general in Queen Elizabeth's time, although that of the single rapier seems to have been occasionally practised much earlier.

The foe, invulnerable still,
 Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
 Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
 And, backwards borne upon the lea,
 Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or, by Him who made
 The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"
 "Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
 Let recreant yield who fears to die."
 Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung,
 Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
 And locked his arms his foeman round.
 Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
 Through bars of brass and triple steel!
 They tug, they strain!—down, down, they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below!
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
 His knee was planted in his breast;
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!
 But hate and fury ill supplied
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late the advantage came,
 To turn the odds of deadly game;
 For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
 Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
 Down came the blow! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close,
 But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeemed, unhop'd, from desperate strife;
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appeared his last;
 In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,
 "Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
 Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
 The praise that Faith and Valour give."
 With that he blew a bugle-note,
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbonnetted, and by the wave
 Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
 By loosened rein, a saddled steed;
 Each onward held his headlong course,
 And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,
 With wonder viewed the bloody spot—
 "Exclaim not, gallants! question not.
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
 Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight;
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
 The sun rides high; I must be boune
 To see the archer-game at noon;
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me!

XVIII.

"Stand, Bayard, stand!" the steed obeyed,
 With arching neck and bended head,
 And glancing eye, and quivering ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid,



and soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down.

But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
 And lightly bounded from the plain,
 Turned on the horse his armed heel,
 And stirred his courage with the steel.
 Bounded the fiery steed in air,
 The rider sate erect and fair,
 Then, like a bolt, from steel cross-bow
 Forth launched, along the plain they go.
 They dashed that rapid torrent through,
 And up Carhonie's hill they flew ;
 Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
 His merry-men followed as they might.
 Along thy banks, swift Teith ! they ride,
 And in the race they mock thy tide ;
 Torry and Lendrick now are past,
 And Deanstown lies behind them cast ?
 They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
 They sink in distant woodland soon ;
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
 They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre ;
 They mark just glance and disappear
 The lofty brow of ancient Keir ;
 They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
 Dark Forth ! amid thy sluggish tides,
 And on the opposing shore take ground,
 With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
 Right hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-forth,
 And soon the bulwark of the North,
 Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
 Upon their fleet career looked down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strained,
 Sudden his steed the leader reined ;
 A signal to his squire he flung,
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung :—
 ' Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,
 Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
 Of stature tall and poor array ?
 Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
 With which he scales the mountain side ?
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom ?'
 " No, by my word ;—a burly groom

He seems, who in the field or chase
 A Baron's train would nobly grace."
 "Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply
 And jealousy, no sharper eye?
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.
 'Tis James of Douglas, by saint Serle!
 The uncle of the banished Earl.
 Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe:
 The king must stand upon his guard;
 Douglas and he must meet prepared."
 Then right hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
 They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
 Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
 Held sad communion with himself:—
 "Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
 A prisoner lies the noble Grame,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel.
 I, only I, can ward their fate—
 God grant the ransom come not late!
 The Abbess hath her promise given,
 My child shall be the bride of heaven;—
 Be pardoned one repining tear!
 For He who gave her, knows how dear,
 How excellent—but that is by,
 And now my business is to die.
 Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled,
 And thou, oh sad and fatal mound!
 That oft has heard the death-axe sound,*

* Stirling was often polluted with noble blood. The fate of William, eighth Earl of Douglas, whom James the Second stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand, and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Mordauck, Duke of Albany, Duncan, Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stewart, were executed at Stirling in 1425. They were beheaded upon an eminence without the castle walls, but making part of the same hill.

As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand—
 The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
 Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
 But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
 And see! upon the crowded street,
 In motley groups what masquers meet
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morrice-dancers come.
 I guess, by all this quaint array,
 The burghers hold their sports to-day.
 James will be there—he loves such show,
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where, in proud career,
 The high-born tilter shivers spear.
 I'll follow to the Castle-park,
 And play my prize—King James shall mark,
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft, in happier days,
 His boyish wonder loved to praise.”

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering draw-bridge rocked and rung,
 And echoed loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the deep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huza.
 And ever James was bending low,
 To his white jennet's saddle bow,
 Doffing his cap to city dame,
 Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame,
 And well the simperer might be vain--
 He chose the fairest of the train.

* Every burgh of Scotland, had its solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. James V.'s ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of King of the Commons. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow.

Gravely he greets each city sire,
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
 "Long live the Commons' King, King James!"
 Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
 And noble dame and damsel bright,
 Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
 Of the steep street and crowded way.
 But in the train you might discern
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern:
 There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
 And the mean burghers' joys disdained;
 And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
 Were each from home a banished man,
 There thought upon their own grey tower,
 Their waving woods, their feudal power,
 And deemed themselves a shameful part
 Of pageant, which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now in the Castle-park, drew out
 Their chequered bands the joyous route.
 There morricers, with bell at heel,
 And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
 But chief, beside the butts, there stand
 Bold Robin Hood* and all his band—
 Friar Tuck with quarter-staff and cowl,
 Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
 Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
 Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
 Their bugles challenge all that will,
 In archery to prove their skill.
 The Douglas bent a bow of might—
 His first shaft centered in the white,
 And when in turn he shot again,
 His second split the first in twain.
 From the King's hand must Douglas take
 A silver dart, the archers' stake;

* The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic in Scotland as well as England at such festivals as we are describing. The game of Robin Hood was usually acted in May.

Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
 Some answering glance of sympathy—
 No kind emotion made reply!
 Indifferent as to archer wight,
 The monarch gave the arrow bright

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
 The manly wrestlers take their stand.
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,
 And proud demanded mightier foes,
 Nor called in vain; for Douglas came.
 —For life, is Hugh of Larbert lame;
 Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
 Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,*
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
 As frozen drop of winter dew.
 Douglas would speak, but in his breast
 His struggling soul his words suppress'd:
 Indignant then he turned him where
 Their arms the brawny yeoman barc.
 To hurl the massive bar in air.
 When each his utmost strength had shown,
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
 And sent the fragment through the sky.
 A rood beyond the farthest mark;
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The grey-haired sires who know the past,
 To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang;
 The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
 A purse well filled with pieces broad.

* The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring. The ram
 no: being very poetical is omitted in the story.

Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
 And threw the gold among the crowd
 Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
 And sharper glance, the dark grey man:
 Till whispers rose among the throng,
 That heart so free, and hand so strong,
 Must to the Douglas' blood belong:
 The old men mark'd, and shook the head,
 To see his hair with silver spread,
 And winked aside, and told each son
 Of feats upon the English done,
 Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
 Was exiled from his native land.
 The women praised his stately form,
 Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm
 The youth, with awe and wonder, saw
 His strength surpassing Nature's law.
 Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
 Till murmurs rose to clamours loud.
 But not a glance from that proud ring
 Of peers who circled round the King:
 With Douglas held communion kind,
 Or called the banished man to mind:
 No, not from those who, at the chase,
 Once held his side the honoured place,
 Begirt his board, and, in the field,
 Found safety underneath his shield,
 For he, whom royal eyes disown,
 When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV.

The monarch saw the gambols flag,
 And bade let loose a gallant stag,
 Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
 Two favourite grey-hounds should pull down,
 That venison free, and Bourdeaux wine,
 Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide—
 The fleetest hound in all the North,
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth,
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And, dashing on the antler'd prey,

Sank her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and, with his leash unbound,
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
 And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck,
 In maiden glee, with garlands deck;
 They were such playmates, that with name
 Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darkened brow and flashing eye;
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride;
 Needs but a buffet and no more,
 The groom lies senseless in his gore.
 Such blow no other hand could deal,
 Though gauntletted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamoured loud the royal train,
 And brandished swords and staves amain;
 But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
 Back on your lives, ye menial pack!
 Beware the Douglas. Yes! behold,
 King James, the Douglas, doomed of old,
 And vainly sought for near and far,
 A victim to atone the war.
 A willing victim, now attends,
 Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
 "Thus is my clemency repaid?
 Presumptuous Lord!" the monarch said;
 "Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
 Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man
 The only man, in whom a foe
 My woman-mercy would not know:

But shall a Monarch's presence brook
 Injurious blow, and haughty look?
 What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
 Give the offender fitting ward.
 Break off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
 And yeoman 'gan to bend their bows—
 "Break off the sports!" he said, and frowned,
 "And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
 Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
 The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
 Repelled by threats and insult loud;
 To earth are borne the old and weak,
 The timorous fly, the women shriek;
 With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
 The hardier urge tumultuous war.
 At once round Douglas darkly sweep
 The royal spears in circle deep,
 And slowly scale the pathway steep;
 While on their rear in thunder pour
 The rabble with disordered roar.
 With grief the noble Douglas saw
 The commons rise against the law
 And to the leading soldier said,
 "Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade
 That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
 For that good deed, permit me then
 A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet, for me,
 Ye break the bands of fealty.
 My life, my honour, and my cause,
 I tender free to Scotland's laws.
 Are these so weak as must require
 The aid of your misguided ire?
 Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
 Is then my selfish rage so strong,
 My sense of public weal so low,
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,

Those chords of love I should unbind,
 Which knit my country and my kind?
 Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
 It will not soothe my captive hour,
 To know those spears our foes should dread,
 For me in kindred gore are red;
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
 For me, that mother wails her son;
 For me, that widow's mate expires,
 For me, that orphans weep their sires,
 That patriots mourn insulted laws,
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.
 Oh let your patience ward such ill,
 And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
 In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
 With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
 For blessings on his generous head,
 Who for his country felt alone,
 Who prized her blood beyond his own.
 Old men, upon the verge of life,
 Blessed him who staid the civil strife;
 And mothers held their babes on high,
 The self-devoted chief to spy,
 Triumphant over wrong and ire,
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
 Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
 As if behind some bier beloved,
 With trailing arms and drooping head,
 The Douglas up the hill he led,
 And at the castle's battled verge,
 With sighs, resigned his honoured charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,
 And would not now vouchsafe again
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
 "Oh Lennox, who would wish to rule
 This changeling crowd, this common fool!"

Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim
 With which they shout the Douglas name?
 With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
 Strained for King James their morning note,
 With like acclaim they hailed the day
 When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
 If he could hurl me from my seat.
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream;
 Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,
 Oh who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
 I guess his cognizance afar—
 What from our cousin, John of Mar?"
 "He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
 Within the safe and guarded ground:
 For some foul purpose yet unknown—
 Most sure for evil to the throne—
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summoned his rebellious crew;
 'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
 These loose banditti stand arrayed.
 The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
 To break their muster marched, and soon
 Your grace will hear of battle fought;
 But earnestly the Earl besought,
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,
 I should have earlier looked to this:
 I lost it in this bustling day.
 Retrace with speed thy former way."

Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
 The best of mine shall be thy meed,
 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
 We do forbid the intended war :
 Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
 Was made our prisoner by a knight,
 And Douglas hath himself and cause
 Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
 The tidings of their leaders lost
 Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
 Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
 For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
 Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly."
 He turned his steed—" My liege, I hie,
 Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
 I fear the broad-swords will be drawn."
 The turf the flying courser spurned,
 And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII. .

Ill with King James's mood that day
 Suited gay feast and minstrel lay ;
 Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
 And soon cut short the festal song.
 Nor less upon the saddened town
 The evening sank in sorrow down,
 The burghers spoke of civil jar,
 Of rumoured feuds and mountain war,
 Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
 All up in arms : the Douglas too,
 They mourned him pent within the hold
 " Where stout Earl William was of old ;"
 And there his word the speaker staid,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 Or pointed to his dagger blade.
 But jaded horsemen from the west,
 At evening to the castle pressed ;
 And busy talkers said they bore
 Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore ;

* Stabbed by James II. in Stirling Castle.

At noon the deadly fray begun,
 And lasted till the set of sun.
 Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
 Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Guard Room.

I.

The sun, awakening, through the smoky air
 Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
 Rousing each caitiff to his task of care.
 Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
 Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
 Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
 Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
 And warning student pale to leave his pen,
 And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.
 What various scenes, and oh! what scenes of-woe,
 Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
 The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
 Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
 The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
 The debtor wakes to thoughts of gyve and jail,
 The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream:
 The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
 Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble
 wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
 With soldier-step and weapon clang,
 While drums, with rolling note, foretell
 Relief to weary sentinel.
 Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
 The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
 And, struggling with the smoky air,
 Deadened the torches' yellow glare.

In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch ;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench ;
Some laboured still their thirst to quench ;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of chieftain in their leader's name,
Adventurers* they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace ;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air,
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer's toil ;
Their rolls showed French and German name ;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halbert, brand, and shield ;
In camps, licentious, wild, and bold ;
In pillage, fierce and uncontrolled ;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

* James V. seems first to have introduced, in addition to the national militia, the service of a small number of mercenaries, who formed a body-guard, called the Foot-Band,

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
 Fought 'twixt Loch-Katrine and Achray.
 Fierce was their speech, and, mid their words,
 Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
 Nor sank their tone to spare the ear
 Of wounded comrades groaning near,
 Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
 Bore token of the mountain sword,
 Though, neighbouring to the court of guard,
 Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;—
 Sad burdened to the ruffian joke,
 And savage oath by fury spoke!—
 At length upstarted John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer,
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew,
 When deed of danger was to do.
 He grieved, that day their games cut short,
 And marr'd the dicers' brawling sport,
 And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
 And, while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

SOLDIER'S SONG.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black jack,
 And seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink upsees* out, and a fig for the vicar!
 Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says, that Belzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye:
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

* A Bacchanalian interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
 And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
 Who infringe the domains of our good mother Church.
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge heard without,
 Stayed in mid roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went—
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent:
 And, beat for jubilee the drum!
 A maid and minstrel with him come
 Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
 Was entering now the court of guard,
 A harper with him, and, in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrank to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 "What news?" they roared:—"I only know,
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,
 As wild and as untameable,
 As the rude mountains where they dwell.
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast."
 "But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp,
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp,
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
 The leader of a juggler band."*

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
 After the fight, these sought our line,
 That aged harper and the girl,
 And, having audience of the Earl,
 Mar bade I should purvey them speed,
 And bring them hitherward with speed.

* The jongleurs or jugglers were wont to travel the country, attended by a woman called a glee-maiden, who amused the company by dancing and tumbling, and frequently an ape that diverted them with its tricks.

Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
 For none shall do them shame or harm."
 "Hear ye his boast!" cried John of Brent,
 Ever to strife and jangling bent;
 "Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
 And yet the jealous niggard grudge
 To pay the forester his fee?
 I'll have my share howe'er it be,
 Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
 Bertram his forward step withstood;
 And, burning in his vengeful mood,
 Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
 Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
 But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
 And dropp'd at once the tartan screen;
 So, from his morning cloud, appears
 The sun of May, through summer tears.
 The savage soldiery, amazed,
 As on descended angel gazed;
 Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
 Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke—"Soldiers, attend!
 My father was the soldier's friend;
 Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
 And with him in the battle bled.
 Not from the valiant, or the strong,
 Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."
 Answered De Brent, most forward still
 In every feat or good or ill,
 "I shame me of the part I played;
 And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
 An outlaw I by Forest laws,
 And merry Needwood knows the cause,
 Poor Rose—if Rose be living now"—
 He wiped his iron eye and brow,
 "Must bear such age, I think, as thou.
 Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
 The Captain of our watch to hall:
 There lies my halbert on the floor;
 And he that steps my halbert o'er,

To do the maid injurious part,
 My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough:
 Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young—
 (Of Tullibardine's house he sprung):
 Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
 Gay was his mien, his humour light,
 And, though by courtesy controlled,
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
 The high-born maiden ill could brook
 The scanning of his curious look
 And dauntless eye; and yet, in sooth,
 Young Lewis was a generous youth;
 But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
 Ill-suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range.
 "Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
 Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
 On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
 Like errant damosel of yore?
 Does thy high quest a knight require,
 Or may the venture suit a squire?"
 Her dark eye flashed; she paused and sighed.
 "Oh what have I to do with pride!—
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father's life,
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The signet ring young Lewis took,
 With deep respect and altered look;
 And said—"This ring our duties own;
 And pardon, if, to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
 Lady, in aught my folly failed.
 Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.

Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
 Repose you till his waking hour;
 Female attendance shall obey
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshal you the way."
 But, ere she followed, with the grace,
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
 On the reluctant maiden's hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffered gold;—
 "Forgive a haughty English heart,
 And oh, forget its ruder part!
 The vacant purse shall be my share,
 Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
 Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
 Where gayer crests may keep afar."
 With thanks—'twas all she could—the maid
 His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
 Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
 "My lady safe, oh let your grace
 Give me to see my master's face!
 His minstrel I—to share his doom
 Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
 Tenth in descent, since first my sires
 Waked for his noble house their lyres,
 Nor one of all the race was known
 But prized its weal above their own.
 With the Chief's birth begins our care;
 Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
 Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
 His earliest feat of field or chase;
 In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
 We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
 Nor leave him till we pour our verse,
 A doleful tribute! o'er his hearse.
 Then let me share his captive lot;
 It is my right—deny it not!"

“ Little we reckon,” said John of Brent,
“ We southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord’s part—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see,”

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner’s moan and fetters’ din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman’s sword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artists formed, who deemed it shame
And in to give their word a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They entered— ’twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old,
Deem’d fit for captive noble’s hold.
“ Here,” said De Brent, “ thou may’st remain
Till the Leach visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well.”
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock’s murmurs growl’d anow.

Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
 A captive feebly raised his head;
 The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew
 Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
 For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
 They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prow
 Shall never stem the billows more,
 Deserted by her gallant band,
 Amid the breakers lies astrand,
 So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
 And oft his fevered limbs he threw
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides
 Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
 Yet cannot heave her from her seat
 Oh! how unlike her course on sea!
 Or his free step on hill and lea!—
 Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
 “What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
 My Mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
 Have they been ruined in my fall?
 Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!
 Yet speak—speak boldly!—do not fear.”
 (For Allan, who his mood well knew,
 Was choked with grief and terror too.)
 “Who fought?—who fled? Old man, be brief;
 Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live?—who bravely died?”
 “Oh, calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,
 “Ellen is safe;”—“For that, thank Heaven!”
 “And hopes are for the Douglas given.
 The Lady Margaret too is well,
 And, for thy clan—on field or fell,
 Has never harp of minstrel told,
 Of combat fought so true and bold.
 Thy stately pine is yet unbent,
 Though many a goodly bough is rent.”

XIV.

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
 And fever's fire was in his eye;

But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
 Chequered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 —“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play
 With measure bold on festal day,
 In yon lone isle . . . again where ne'er
 Shall harper play, or warrior hear . . .
 That stirring air that peals on high,
 O'er Dermid's race our victory.
 Strike it!—and then (for well thou canst)
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glauced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight,
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
 For the fair field of fighting men,
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soared from battle fray.”
 The trembling bard with awe obeyed—
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awakened the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along;—
 As shallop launched on river's tide,
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.*

“The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Ben-venue,
 For, ere he parted, he would say,
 Farewell to lovely Loch-Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—

* A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It happened however so late as the invasion of Scotland by Oliver Cromwell, one of whose soldiers was thus slain just as he had almost secured the means of conveyance for his companions to the island at the extremity of Loch-Katrine. His party on witnessing his fate, abandoned their ferocious enterprise.

There is no breeze upon the fern,
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?
 —I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far!
 'To hero boune for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

XVI.

"Their light-armed archers far and near
 Surveyed the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
 The stern battalia crowned.
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad;
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
 That shadowed o'er their road.
 Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,

Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirred the roe ;
 The host moves, like a deep sea-wave,
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
 The lake is passed, and now they gain
 A narrow and a broken plain,
 Before the 'Trosachs' rugged jaws ;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

" At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
 Had pealed the banner-cry of hell !
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
 The archery appear :
 For life ! for life ! their flight they ply—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving high,
 And broad-swords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in their rear.
 Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued ;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood ?
 —' Down, down,' cried Mar, ' your lances down !
 Bear back both friend and foe !
 Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levell'd low ;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.
 —' We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel* cows the game !

* A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the *Tinchel*.

They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

XVIII.

" Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broad-sword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below ;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash ;
I heard the broad-sword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang !
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank—
' My banner-man, advance !
I see,' he cried, ' their column shake.
Now, gallants ! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance !'
The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom ;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then !
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd ;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanished the mountain sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass ;

None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within.
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Grey Ben-venue I soon repassed,
Loch-Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set—the clouds are met—
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosach's gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel-ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North,
High on the mountain thunder forth,
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
 The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
 Till Moray pointed with his lance,
 And cried—'Behold yon isle!
 See! none are left to guard its strand,
 But women weak, that wring the hand:
 'Tis there of yore the robber band
 Their booty wont to pile;—
 My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
 To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
 And loose a shallop from the shore.
 Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
 Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.
 Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
 On earth his casque and corslet rung,
 He plunged him in the wave:—
 All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
 And to their clamours Ben-venue
 A mingled echo gave;
 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
 The helpless females scream for fear,
 And yells for rage the mountaineer.
 'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
 Poured down at once the lowering heaven;
 A whirlwind swept Loch-Katrine's breast,
 Her billows reared their snowy crest.
 Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
 To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
 For round him showered, 'mid rain and hail,
 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
 In vain. He nears the isle—and lo!
 His hand is on a shallop's bow.
 —Just then a flash of lightning came,
 It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
 I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,
 Behind an oak I saw her stand,
 A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—
 It darkened—but amid the moan
 Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
 Another flash! the spearman floats
 A weltering corpse beside the boats,

And the stern Matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

“ ‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,
The Gaels’ exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprang from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rang forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the monarch’s name, afar
A herald’s voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell’s lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold.”
—But here the lay made sudden stand
The harp escap’d the minstrel’s hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp—his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy.
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o’er the dead.

XXII.

LAMENT.

“ And art thou cold, and lowly laid,
Thy foemen’s dread, thy people’s aid,
Breadalbane’s boast, Clan-Alpine’s shade;

For thee shall none a requiem say !
 —For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honoured pine !

“What groans shall yonder valleys fill !
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill !
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
 Thy fall before the race was won,
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun !
 There breathes not clansman of thy line,
 But would have given his life for thine.
 Oh woe for Alpine's honoured pine !

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage !—
 The captive thrush may brook the cage,
 The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
 Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain !
 And, when its notes awake again,
 Even she, so long beloved in vain,
 Shall with my harp her voice combine,
 And mix her woe and tears with mine,
 To wail Clan-Alpine's honoured pine.”

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
 Remained in lordly bower apart,
 Where played, with many-coloured gleams,
 Through storied pane the rising beams.
 In vain on gilded roof they fall,
 And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
 And for her use a menial train
 A rich collation spread in vain.
 The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
 Scarce drew one curious glance astray ;
 Or, if she looked, 'twas but to say,
 With better omen dawned the day
 In that lone isle, where waved on high
 The dun deer's hide for canopy ;
 Where oft her noble father shared
 The simple meal her care prepared.

While Lufra, crouching by her side,
 Her station claimed with jealous pride;
 And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
 Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
 Whose answer, oft at random made,
 The wandering of his thoughts betrayed—
 Those who such simple joys have known
 Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
 But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
 The window seeks with cautious tread.
 What distant music has the power
 To win her in this woeful hour!
 'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
 Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.

“ My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
 My idle greyhound loathes his food,
 My horse is weary of his stall,
 And I am sick of captive thrall.
 I wish I were as I have been,
 Hunting the hart in forests green,
 With bended bow and bloodhound free,
 For that's the life is meet for me.

I hate to learn the ebb of time,
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch, along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.

No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eve on wing of glee—
 That life is lost to love and me!”

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
 The list'ner had not turned her head,
 It trickled still, the starting tear,
 When light a footstep struck her ear,
 And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
 She turned the hastier, lest again
 The prisoner should renew his strain.
 "Oh welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;
 "How may an almost orphan maid
 Pay the deep debt." "Oh say not so
 To me no gratitude you owe.
 Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
 And bid thy noble father live;
 I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
 With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
 No tyrant he, though ire and pride
 May lead his better mood aside.
 Come, Ellen, come!—'tis more than time;
 He holds his court at morning prime."
 With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
 As to a brother's arm she clung.
 Gently he dried the falling tear,
 And gently whispered hope and cheer;
 Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
 Through gallery fair and high arcade,
 Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
 A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
 A thronging scene of figures bright;
 It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
 As when the setting sun has given
 Ten thousand hues to summer even,
 And, from their tissue, fancy frames
 Aërial knights and fairy dames.
 Still by Fitz-James her footing staid
 A few faint steps she forward made,
 Then slow her drooping head she raised,
 And fearful round the presence gazed;

For him she sought, who owned this state,
 The dreaded prince whose will was fate !
 She gazed on many a princely port,
 Might well have ruled a royal court ;
 On many a splendid garb she gazed—
 Then turned bewildered and amazed,
 For all stood bare ; and, in the room,
 Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
 To him each lady's look was lent,
 On him each courtier's eye was bent ;
 Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
 He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
 The centre of the glittering ring—
 And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King !*

XXVII.

As wreath of snow on mountain breast,
 Slides from the rock that gave it rest ;
 Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
 And at the Monarch's feet she lay ;
 No word her choking voice commands—
 She showed the ring—she clasped her hands.
 Oh ! not a moment could he brook,
 The generous prince, that suppliant look !
 Gently he raised her—and the while
 Checked with a glance the circle's smile.
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
 And bade her terrors be dismissed—
 " Yes, Fair ; the wandering poor Fitz-James
 The fealty of Scotland claims.
 To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring
 He will redeem his signet ring.
 Ask nought for Douglas—yester even,
 His prince and he have much forgiven :
 Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
 I from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
 We would not to the vulgar crowd
 Yield what they craved with clamour loud ;

* James V., from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, was as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinages of his several palaces in various disguises.

Calmly we heard and judged his cause.
 Our council aided and our laws.
 I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
 With stout De Vaux and grey Glencairn;
 And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
 The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
 But, lovely infidel, how now?
 What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
 Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
 Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
 And on his neck his daughter hung.
 The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
 The sweetest, holiest draught of power—
 When it can say, with godlike voice,
 Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
 Yet would not James the general eye
 On nature's raptures long should pry;
 He stepp'd between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
 Steal not my proselyte away!
 The riddle 'tis my right to read,
 That brought this happy chance to speed.
 Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray,
 In life's more low but happier way,
 'Tis under name which veils my power,
 Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
 Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,*
 And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
 Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
 Thus learn to right the injured cause."
 Then, in a tone apart and low,
 —"Ah, little trait'ress! none must know
 What idle dream, what lighter thought,
 What vanity full dearly bought,
 Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
 My spell-bound steps to Ben-venue,

* William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun. It was probably derived from the romantic legend which connected Stirling with King Arthur, to which the mention of the round table gives countenance.

In dangerous hour, and all but gave
 Thy monarch's life to mountain glaive !
 Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guessed,
 He probed the weakness of her breast ;
 But, with that consciousness, there came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,
 And more she deemed the monarch's ire
 Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew ;
 And to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
 "Forbear thy suit :—the King of kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings.
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand ;—
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live !
 Hast thou no other boon to crave ?—
 No other captive friend to save ?"
 Blushing, she turned her from the King
 And to the Douglas gave the ring,
 As if she wished her sire to speak
 The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
 "Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
 And stubborn justice holds her course.
 Malcolm, come forth !"—And, at the word,
 Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
 "For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
 From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
 Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
 Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
 And sought amid thy faithful clan,
 A refuge for an outlawed man,
 Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.
 Fetters and warder for the Græme !"
 His chain of gold the King unstrung,
 The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,

Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight cospse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing
bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a Seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant speil—
And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare-thee-well!

THE

VISION OF DON RODERICK.

THE following poem is founded upon a Spanish tradition, particularly detailed in the notes; but bearing, in general, that Don Roderick, the last Gothic King of Spain, when the invasion of the Moors was impending, had the temerity to descend into an ancient vault, near Toledo, the opening of which had been denounced as fatal to the Spanish monarchy. The legend adds, that his rash curiosity was mortified by an emblematical representation of those Saracens who, in the year 711, defeated him in battle, and reduced Spain under their dominion. I have presumed to prolong the vision of the revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula; and to divide it, by a supposed change of scene, into *three periods*. The *first* of these represents the invasion of the Moors, the defeat and death of Roderick, and closes with the peaceful occupation of the country by the victors. The *second period* embraces the state of the Peninsula, when the conquests of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the East and West Indies had raised to the highest pitch the renown of their arms; sullied, however, by superstition and cruelty. An allusion to the inhumanities of the Inquisition terminates this picture. The *last part* of the poem opens with the state of Spain previous to the unparalleled treachery of Buonaparte; gives a sketch of the usurpation attempted upon that unsuspecting and friendly kingdom, and terminates with the arrival of the British succours. It may be farther proper to mention, that the object of the poem is less to commemorate or detail particular incidents, than to exhibit a general and impressive picture of the several periods brought upon the stage.

I am too sensible of the respect due to the Public, especially by one who has already experienced more than ordinary indulgence, to offer any apology for the inferiority of the poetry to the subject it is chiefly designed to commemorate. Yet I think it proper to mention, that, while I was hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events, the task was most cruelly interrupted by the successive deaths of Lord President Blair, and Lord Viscount Melville. In those distinguished characters, I had not only to regret persons whose lives were most important to Scotland, but also whose notice and patronage honoured my entrance upon active life; and I may add, with melancholy pride, who permitted my more advanced age to claim no common share in their friendship. Under such interruptions, the following verses, which my best and happiest efforts must have left far unworthy of their theme, have, I am myself sensible, an appearance of negligence and incoherence, which, in other circumstances, I might have been able to remove.

EDINBURGH, June 24, 1811.

THE
VISION OF DON RODERICK.

QUID DIGNUM MEMORARE TUIS, HISPANIA, TERRIS,
VOX HUMANA VALET. CLAUDIAM.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LIVES there a strain, whose sounds of mounting
May rise distinguish'd o'er the din of war, [fire,
Or died it with yon master of the lyre,
Who sung beleaguer'd Iliion's evil star?
Such, WELLINGTON, might reach thee from afar,
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's range;
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar,
All as it swell'd twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That clangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all-o'erpowering measure,
Might melodize with each tumultuous sound,
Each voice of fear or triumph, woe or pleasure,
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores around;
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crown'd,
The female shriek, the ruin'd peasant's moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foil'd oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we weak minstrels of a laggard day,
Skill'd but to imitate an elder page,

Timid and raptureless, can we repay
 The debt thou claim'st in this exhausted age?
 Thou giv'st our lyres a theme, that might engage
 Those that could send thy name o'er sea and
 land,

While sea and land shall last; for Homer's rage
 A theme; a theme for Milton's mighty hand—
 How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose rugged breast
 The friends of Scottish freedom found repose;
 Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds have soothed
 their rest,

Returning from the field of vanquish'd foes;
 Say, have ye lost each wild majestic close,
 That erst the choir of bards or druids flung,
 What time their hymn of victory arose,
 And Cattræth's glens with voice of triumph
 rung,

And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-hair'd Lly-
 warch sung.*

V.

O! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
 As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say,
 When sweeping wild and sinking soft again,
 Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway;
 If ye can echo such triumphant lay,

Then lend the note to him has loved you long
 Who pious gather'd each tradition grey,
 That floats your solitary wastes along,

And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft soe'er the task
 Of truant verse hath lighten'd graver care,

* Much of the ancient poetry, preserved in Wales, refers to events which happened in the North-west of England and South-west of Scotland, where the Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons.—Llywarch, the celebrated bard and monarch, was Prince of Argoon, in Cumberland; and his youthful exploits were performed upon the Border, although in his age he was driven into Powys by the successes of the Anglo-Saxons. As for Merlin Wyllt, or the Savage, his name of Caledonian, and his retreat into the Caledonian wood, appropriates him to Scotland.

From muse or sylvan was he wont to ask,
 In phrase poetic, inspiration fair;
 Careless he gave his numbers to the air,—
 They came unsought for, if applauses came;
 Nor for himself prefers he now the prayer;
 Let but his verse besit a hero's fame,
 Immortal be the verse!—forgot the poet's name.

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer toss'd:
 "Minstrel! the fame of whose romantic lyre,
 Capricious swelling now, may soon be lost,
 Like the light flickering of a cottage fire:
 If to such task presumptuous thou aspire,
 Seek not from us the meed to warrior due;
 Age after age has gather'd son to sire,
 Since our grey cliffs the din of conflict knew,
 Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

"Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
 Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
 By milk-maid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
 Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted
 spring;* [sing,
 Save where their legends grey-hair'd shepherds
 That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
 Of feuds obscure, and border ravaging,
 And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
 Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

"No! search romantic lands, where the near Sun
 Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
 Where the rude villager, his labour done,
 In verse spontaneous† chants some favour'd
 name;

* A copious fountain upon the ridge of Minchmore, called the Cheesewell, is supposed to be sacred to the fairies, and it was customary to propitiate them by throwing in something upon passing it.

† The flexibility of the Italian and Spanish languages, renders these countries distinguished for the talent of improvisation.

Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim
 Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet;
 Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Græme.*
 He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
 Old Albin's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet!

X.

"Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
 Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
 Where in the proud Alhambra's ruined breast
 Barbaric monuments of pomp repose;
 Or where the banners of more ruthless foes
 Than the fierce Moor, float o'er Toledo's fane,
 From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws
 An anxious glance, to spy upon the plain
 The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

XI.

"There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
 Still lightens in the sun-burnt native's eye;
 The stately port, slow step, and visage dark,
 Still mark enduring pride and constancy.
 And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
 Beam not, as once, thy nobles' dearest pride,
 Iberia! oft thy crestless peasantry
 Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
 Have seen, yet dauntless stood—'gainst fortune fought
 and died.

XII.

"And cherish'd still by that unchanging race,
 Are themes for minstrelsy more high than thine;
 Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
 Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;
 Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
 With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
 Forming a model meet for minstrel line. [said:
 Go, seek such theme!"]—The Mountain Spirit
 With filial awe I heard—I heard, and I obey'd.

* The name of Græme, in England is usually pronounced as a disyllable.

THE VISION.

I.

REARING their crests amid the cloudless skies,
 And darkly clustering in the pale moonlight,
 Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
 As from a trembling lake of silver white;
 Their mingled shadows intercept the sight
 Of the broad burial-ground outstretch'd below,
 And nought disturbs the silence of the night;
 All sleeps in sullen shade, or silver glow,
 All save the heavy swell of Teio's ceaseless flow.

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
 Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp;
 Their changing rounds as watchful horsemen ride,
 To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp,
 For, through the river's night-fog rolling damp,
 Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen,
 Which glimmer'd back, against the moon's fair
 Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen, [lamp,
 And standards proudly pitch'd, and warders arm'd
 between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
 Since last the deep-mouth'd bell of vespers toll'd,
 The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
 Their post beneath the proud Cathedral hold:
 A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
 Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace,
 Bear slender darts, and casques bedeck'd with gold,
 While silver-studded belts their shoulders grace,
 Where ivory quivers ring in the broad falchion's
 place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
 They murmur'd at their master's long delay,
 And held his lengthen'd orisons in sport: [stay,
 "What! will Don Roderick here till morning

To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?
 And are his hours in such dull penance past
 For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to pay?"*
 Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
 And wish'd the lingering dawn would glimmer forth
 at last.

V.

But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
 An ear of fearful wonder to the King;
 The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
 So long that sad confession witnessing:
 For Roderick told of many a hidden thing,
 Such as are lothly utter'd to the air,
 When Fear, Remorse, and Shame, the bosom wring,
 And Guilt his secret burthen cannot bear,
 And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from
 Despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair,
 The stream of failing light was feebly roll'd;
 But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare,
 Was shadow'd by his hand and mantle's fold.
 While of his hidden soul the sins he told,
 Proud Alaric's descendant could not brook,
 That mortal man his bearing should behold,
 Or boast that he had seen, when conscience shook,
 Fear tame a monarch's brow, remorse a warrior's
 look.

VII.

The old man's faded cheek wax'd yet more pale,
 As many a secret sad the king bewray'd;
 And sign and glance eked out the unfinished tale,
 When in the midst his faltering whisper staid.

* The invasion of the Moors is generally attributed to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors, Caba, or Cava, the daughter of Count Julian. In his indignation Julian formed an alliance with the Moors, and countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the enemy.

"Thus royal Witiza* was slain,"—he said;

"Yet, holy father, deem not it was I."—

Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade—

"O rather deem 'twas stern necessity!

Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

VIII.

"And, if Florinda's shrieks alarm'd the air,

If she invoked her absent sire in vain,

And on her knees implored that I would spare,

Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash refrain!—

All is not as it seems—the female train

Know by their bearing to disguise their mood:"

But Conscience here, as if in high disdain,

Sent to the Monarch's cheek the burning blood—

He stay'd his speech abrupt—and up the Prelate
stood.

IX.

"O harden'd offspring of an iron race!

What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say?

What alms, or prayers, or penance can efface

Murder's dark spot, wash treason's stain away!

For the foul ravisher how shall I pray, [boast?

Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his

How hope Almighty vengeance shall delay,

Unless, in mercy to yon Christian host,

He spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless sheep be
lost.'—

X.

Then kindled the dark tyrant in his mood,

And to his brow return'd its dauntless gloom;

"And welcome then," he cried, "be blood for blood,

For treason treachery, for dishonour doom!

Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom.

Show, for thou canst—give forth the fated key,

And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,

Where, if aught true in old tradition be,

His nation's future fates a Spanish King shall see."—

* The predecessor of Roderick upon the Spanish throne, and slain by his connivance, as is affirmed by Rodriguez of Toledo, the father of Spanish history.

XI

“Ill-fated prince! recall the desperate word,
 Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey!
 Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
 Never to former Monarch entrance-way;
 Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
 Save to a King, the last of all his line,
 What time his empire totters to decay,
 And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
 And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine.”—

XII.

—“Prelate! a Monarch’s fate brooks no delay!
 Lead on!”—The ponderous key the old man took.
 And held the winking lamp, and led the way
 By winding stair, dark aisle, and secret nook,
 Then on an ancient gateway bent his look;
 And, as the key the desperate King essay’d,
 Low mutter’d thunders the Cathedral shook,
 And twice he stopp’d, and twice new effort made,
 Till the huge bolts roll’d back, and the loud hinges
 bray’d.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall;
 Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone,
 Of polish’d marble, black as funeral pall,
 Carved o’er with signs and characters unknown.
 A paly light, as of the dawning, shone
 Through the sad bounds, but whence they could
 not spy;
 For window to the upper air was none;
 Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry
 Wonders that ne’er till then were seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
 Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place;
 Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,
 Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.
 Moulded they seem’d for kings of giant race,
 That lived and sinn’d before the avenging flood;

This grasp'd a scythe, that rested on a mace ;
 This spread his wings for flight, that pondering
 stood,
 Each stubborn seem'd and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fix'd was the right-hand Giant's brazen look
 Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,
 As if its ebb he measured by a book,
 Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand ;
 In which was wrote of many a falling land,
 Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven ;
 And o'er that pair their names in scroll expand—
 " LO, DESTINY and TIME ! to whom by Heaven
 The guidance of the earth is for a season given."—

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away ;
 And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,
 That right-hand Giant 'gan his club upsway,
 As one that startles from a heavy sleep.
 Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep
 At once descended with the force of thunder,
 And, hurling down at once, in crumbled heap,
 The marble boundary was rent asunder,
 And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and
 wonder.

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
 Realms as of Spain in vision'd prospect laid,
 Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
 As by some skilful artist's hand portray'd :
 Here, cross'd by many a wild Sierra's shade,
 And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye ;
 There, rich with vineyard and with olive-glade,
 Or deep-embrown'd by forests huge and high,
 Or wash'd by mighty streams, that slowly mur-
 mur'd by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage
 Pass'd forth the bands of masquers trimly led,

In various forms, and various equipage,
 While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed;
 So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
 Successive pageants fill'd that mystic scene,
 Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,
 And issue of events that had not been; [tween
 And ever and anon strange sounds were heard be-

XIX.

First shrill'd an unrepeat'd female shriek!—
 It seem'd as if Don Roderick knew the call,
 For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek.—
 Then answer'd kettle-drum and atabal,
 Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appal,
 The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelies yell,*
 Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.
 Needs not to Roderick their dread import tell—
 "The Moor!" he cried, "the Moor!—ring out the
 tocsin bell!

XX.

"They come! they come! I see the groaning lands
 White with the turbans of each Arab horde,
 Swart Zarah joins her misbelieving bands,
 Alla and Mahomet their battle-word,
 The choice they yield the Koran or the sword.—
 See how the Christians rush to arms amain!—
 In yonder shout the voice of conflict roar'd;
 The shadowy hosts are closing on the plain—
 Now, God and St Iago strike, for the good cause of
 Spain!"

XXI.

"By heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians
 yield!—
 Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
 The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field—
 Is not yon steed Orelia?—Yes, 'tis mine!†

* The tecbir, (derived from the words *Alla acbar*, God is most mighty,) was the original war-cry of the Saracens. The *Lelie*, well known to the Christians during the crusades, is the shout of *Alla ilia Alla*, the Mahomedan confession of faith.

† In the battle of Xeres fought by Don Roderick against the Moors A. D. 714, the Spaniards were defeated with great slaughter, and the king himself was drowned in the Xeres while crossing it in his flight. Orelia, the courser of Don Roderick, was celebrated for her speed and form.

But never was she turn'd from battle line ;—
 Lc ! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and
 Curses pursue the slave and wrath divine ! [stone !
 Rivers engulf him !"—"Hush," in shuddering
 tone,
 The Prelate said ; "rash Prince, yon vision'd form's
 thine own."—

XXII.

Just then, a torrent crossed the fier's course ;
 The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried ;
 But the deep eddies whelm'd both man and horse,
 Swept like benighted peasant down the tide ;
 And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide,
 As numerous as their native locust band ;
 Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide,
 With naked scimitars mete out the land,
 And for their bondsmen base the freeborn natives
 brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to enclose
 The loveliest maidens of the Christian line ;
 Then, menials to their misbelieving foes,
 Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine ;
 Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's sign,
 By impious hands was from the altar thrown,
 And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
 Echoed, for holy hymn and organ tone,
 The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering
 moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick ?—E'en as one who spies
 Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's sable
 woof,
 And hears around his children's piercing cries,
 And sees the pale assistants stand aloof ;
 While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof,
 His folly, or his crime, have caused his grief ;
 And, while above him nods the crumbling roof,
 He curses earth and heaven—himself in chief—
 Desperate of earthly aid, despairing Heaven's relief !

XXV.

That scythe-armed Giant turned his fatal glass,
 And twilight on the landscape closed her wings;
 Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
 And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings;
 And to the sound the bell-deck'd dancer springs,
 Bazars resound as when their marts are met,
 In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings,
 And on the land an evening seem'd to set,
 The Imaum's chant was heard from mosque or
 minaret.

XXVI.

So pass'd that pageant. Ere another came,
 The visionary scene was wrapp'd in smoke,
 Whose sulph'rous wreaths were cross'd by sheets
 of flame;
 With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
 Till Roderick deem'd the fiends had burst their
 yoke,
 And waved 'gainst heaven the infernal gon-
 falone!
 For War a new and dreadful language spoke.
 Never by ancient warrior heard or known;
 Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was
 her tone.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away—
 The Christians have regain'd their heritage;
 Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray,
 And many a monastery decks the stage,
 And lofty church, and low-brow'd hermitage.
 The land obeys a Hermit and a Knight,—
 The Genii these of Spain for many an age;
 This clad in sackcloth, that in armour bright,
 And that was VALOUR named, this BIGOTRY was
 hight.

XXVIII.

VALOUR was harness'd like a Chief of old,
 Arm'd at all points, and prompt for knightly gest;

His sword was temper'd in the Ebro cold,
 Morena's eagle-plume adorn'd his crest,
 The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
 Fierce he stepp'd forward and flung down his
 As if of mortal kind to brave the best. [gage,
 Him follow'd his Companion, dark and sage,
 As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
 In look and language proud as proud might be,
 Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights and fame,
 Yet was that bare-foot Monk more proud than
 And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree, [he;
 So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound.
 And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
 Till ermined Age, and Youth in arms renown'd,
 Honouring his scourge and hair-cloth, meekly kiss'd
 the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOUR, peerless Knight,
 Who ne'er to King or Kaisar veil'd his crest,
 Victorious still in bull-feast, or in fight,
 Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
 Stoop'd ever to that Anchoret's behest;
 Nor reason'd of the right nor of the wrong,
 But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
 And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
 For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some new found world,
 That latest sees the sun, or first the morn;
 Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurl'd,—
 Ingots of ore from rich Potosi borne,
 Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
 Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and
 Idols of gold from heathen temples torn, [foul;
 Bedabbled all with blood.—With grisly scowl
 The Hermit mark'd the stains, and smiled beneath
 his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
 Tribute to heaven of gratitude and praise;
 And at his word the choral hymns awake,
 And many a hand the silver censer sways.
 But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
 Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire,
 The groans of prison'd victims mar the lays,
 And shrieks of agony confound the quire,
 While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darken'd scenes
 expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
 As once again revolved that measured sand;
 Such sounds as when, for sylvan dance prepared,
 Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band;
 When for the light Bolero ready stand
 The Mozo blithe, with gay Muchacha met,*
 He conscious of his broider'd cap and band,
 She of her netted locks and light corsette,
 Each tiptoe perch'd to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;
 For VALOUR had relaxed his ardent look,
 And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
 Lay stretch'd, full loth the weight of arms to
 brook;
 And soften'd BIGOTRY, upon his book,
 Patter'd a task of little good or ill:
 But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,
 Whistled the muleteer o'er vale and hill,
 And rung from village-green the merry Seguidille.

XXXV.

Grey Royalty, grown impotent of toil,
 Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold,
 And careless saw his rule become the spoil
 Of a loose Female and her Minion bold;

* The Bolero is a very light and active dance, much practised by the Spaniards, in which castanets are always used. *Mozo* and *Muchacha* are equivalent to our phrase of lad and lass.

But peace was on the cottage and the fold,
From court intrigue, from bickering faction far,
Beneath the chesnut tree Love's tale was told;
And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
Sweet stoop'd the western sun, sweet rose the even-
ing star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand
When first from Carmel by the Tishbite seen,
Came slowly overshadowing Israel's land,
Awhile, perchance, bedeck'd with colours sheen,
While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been,
Limning with purple and with gold its shroud,
Till darker folds obscured the blue serene,
And blotted heaven with one broad sable cloud—
Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirlwinds howl'd
aloud;—

XXXVII.

Even so upon that peaceful scene was pour'd,
Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
And offer'd peaceful front and open hand;
Veiling the perjured treachery he plann'd,
By friendship's zeal and honour's specious guise,
Until he won the passes of the land;
Then, burst were honour's oath, and friendship's
ties!
He clutch'd his vulture-grasp, and call'd fair Spain
his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown nis anxious forehead bore;
And well such diadem his heart became,
Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er,
Or check'd his course for piety or shame;
Who, train'd a soldier, deem'd a soldier's fame
Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
Though neither truth nor honour deck'd his name;
Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
Reck'd not of Monarch's faith, or Mercy's kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came :
 The spark, that, from a suburb hovel's hearth
 Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
 Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth.
 And for the soul that bade him waste the earth—
 The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,
 That poisons the glad husband-field with dearth,
 And by destruction bids its fame endure,
 Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form :
 Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor show'd,
 With which she beckon'd him through fight and
 storm,
 And all he crush'd that cross'd his desperate road,
 Nor thought, nor fear'd, nor look'd on what he
 trode ;
 Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not
 slake,
 So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad—
 It was AMBITION bade his terrors wake,
 Nor deign'd she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurn'd at mean revenge,
 Or stay'd her hand for conquer'd foeman's moan,
 As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,
 By Cæsar's side she cross'd the Rubicon ;
 Nor joy'd she to bestow the spoils she won,
 As when the banded powers of Greece were task'd
 To war beneath the Youth of Macedon :
 No seemly veil her modern minion ask'd.
 He saw her hideous face, and loved the tiend un-
 mask'd.

XLII.

That Prelate mark'd his march—On banners blazed
 With battles won in many a distant land,
 On eagle-standards and on arms he gaz'd ;
 "And hop'st thou, then," he said, "thy power
 shall stand ?

O thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
 And thou hast temper'd it with slaughter's flood;
 And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's hand!
 Gore-moisten'd trees shall perish in the bud,
 And, by a bloody death, shall die the Man of Blood!"

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckon'd from his train
 A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,
 And paled his temples with the crown of Spain,
 While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, "Cas-
 tile!"*
 Not that he loved him—No!—in no man's weal,
 Scarce in his own, e'er joy'd that sullen heart;
 Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel,
 That the poor puppet might perform his part,
 And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
 Not long the silence of amazement hung,
 Nor brook'd they long their friendly faith abused;
 For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
 Exclaim'd, "To arms!" and fast to arms they sprung.
 And VALOUR woke, that Genius of the land!
 Pleasure, and ease, and sloth, aside he flung,
 As burst the awakening Nazarite his band,
 When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clench'd his
 dreadful hand.

XLV.

That mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
 Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
 Now doff'd his royal robe in act to fly,
 And from his brow the diadem unbound
 So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
 From Tarik's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown
 These martial satellites hard labour found,
 To guard awhile his substituted throne—
 Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

* The heralds at the coronation of a Spanish monarch proclaim his name three times, and repeat three times the word *Castilla, Castilla!*

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle rung,
 And it was echoed from Corunna's wall;
 Stately Seville responsive war-shout flung,
 Granada caught it in her Moorish hall;
 Galicia bade her children fight or fall,
 Wild Biscay shook his mountain-coronet
 Valencia roused her at the battle-call,
 And, foremost still where Valour's sons are met
 Fast started to his gun each fiery Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappall'd, and burning for the fight,
 The Invaders march, of victory secure;
 Skilful their force to sever or unite,
 And train'd alike to vanquish or endure,
 Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to ensure,
 Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow,
 To quell by boasting, and by bribes to lure;
 While nought against them bring the unprac-
 tised foe,
 Save hearts for freedom's cause, and hands for free-
 dom's blow.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march—but O! they march not forth
 By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
 As when their eagles, sweeping through the North,
 Destroy'd at every stoop an ancient reign!
 Far other fate had Heaven decreed for Spain;
 In vain the steel, in vain the torch was plied,
 New Patriot armies started from the slain,
 High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide,
 And oft the God of Battles bless'd the righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail,
 Remain'd their savage waste. With blade and
 brand,
 By day the Invaders ravaged hill and dale,
 But, with the darkness, the Guerilla band
 Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land,
 And claim'd for blood the retribution due,

Probed the hard heart, and lopp'd the murderous
 hand ;
 And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she
 threw,
 'Midst ruins they had made the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What Minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
 Amid the vision'd strife from sea to sea,
 How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
 Still honour'd in defeat as victory !
 For that sad pageant of events to be,
 Show'd every form of fight by field and flood ;
 Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth their glee,
 Beheld, while riding on the tempest-scud,
 The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrench'd
 with blood !

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the tongue
 That names thy name without the honour due !
 For never hath the harp of minstrel rung,
 Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true !
 Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shatter'd ruins knew
 Each art of war's extremity had room,
 Twice from thy half-sack'd streets the foe withdrew,
 And when at length stern Fate decreed thy doom,
 They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody
 tomb.*

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad City ! Though in chains,
 Entrall'd thou canst not be ! Arise and claim
 Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
 For what thou worshipp'st !—thy sainted Dame,
 She of the Column, honour'd be her name,
 By all, whate'er their creed, who honour love !
 And like the sacred relics of the flame,
 That gave some martyr to the blest above,
 To every loyal heart may thy sad embers prove !

* The interesting account of Mr Vaughan has made most readers acquainted with the first siege of Zaragoza. The last and fatal siege of that gallant and devoted city is detailed with great eloquence and precision in the "Edinburgh Annual Register" for 1809.

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck. Gerona fair!
 Faithful to death thy heroes should be sung,
 Manning the towers while o'er their heads the air
 Swart as the smoke from raging furnace hung;
 Now thicker darkening where the mine was sprung,
 Now briefly lighten'd by the cannon's flare,
 Now arch'd with fire-sparks as the bomb was flung,
 And reddening now with conflagration's glare,
 While by the fatal light the foes for storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife, and fear,
 While the earth shook, and darken'd was the sky,
 And wide Destruction stunned the listening ear,
 Appall'd the heart, and stupified the eye,—
 Afar was heard that thrice-repeated cry,
 In which old Albion's heart and tongue unite,
 Whene'er her soul is up and pulse beats high,
 Whether it hail the wine-cup or the fight,
 And bid each arm be strong, or bid each heart be light.

LV

Don Roderick turn'd him as the shout grew loud—
 A varied scene the changeful vision show'd,
 For where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
 A gallant navy stemm'd the billows broad.
 From mast and stern St George's symbol flow'd,
 Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear;
 Mottling the sea their landward barges row'd,
 And flash'd the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
 And the wild beach return'd the seaman's jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring sight!
 The billows foam'd beneath a thousand oars,
 Fast as they land the red-cross ranks unite,
 Legions on legions brightening all the shores.
 Then banners rise, and cannon-signal roars,
 Then peals the warlike thunder of the drum,

Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-flourish pours,
 And patriot hopes awake, and doubts are dumb,
 For, bold in Freedom's cause, the bands of Ocean
 come!

LVII.

A various host they came—whose ranks display
 Each mode in which the warrior meets the fight,
 The deep battalion locks its firm array,
 And meditates his aim the marksman light;
 Far glance the lines of sabres flashing bright,
 Where mounted squadrons shake the echoing
 mead,
 Lacks not artillery breathing flame and night,
 Nor the fleet ordnance whirl'd by rapid steed,
 That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred realms they came,
 Brethren in arms, but rivals in renown—
 For you fair hands shall merry England claim,
 And with their deeds of valour deck her crown.
 Hers their bold port, and hers their martial frown,
 And hers their scorn of death in freedom's cause,
 Their eyes of azure, and their locks of brown,
 And the blunt speech that bursts without a pause,
 And freeborn thoughts, which league the Soldier
 with the Laws.

LIX.

And O! loved warriors of the Minstrel's land!
 Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave!
 The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
 And harsher features, and a mien more grave;
 But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd heart so brave
 As that which beats beneath the Scottish plaid,
 And when the pibroch bids the battle rave,
 And level for the charge your arms are laid,
 Where lives the desperate foe, that for such onset
 staid!

LX.

Hark! from you stately ranks what laughter rings,
 Mingling wild mirth with war's stern minstrelsy,

His jest while each blithe comrade round him flings
 And moves to death with military glee:
 Boast, Erin, boast them! tameless, frank, and free,
 In kindness warm, and fierce in danger known,
 Rough Nature's children, humorous as she:
 And HE, yon Chieftain—strike the proudest
 tone
 Of thy bold harp, green Isle!—the Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira should be shown,
 On Talavera's fight should Roderick gaze,
 And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
 And see Busaco's crest with light'ning blaze:--
 But shall fond fable mix with heroes' praise?
 Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs
 room?
 And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
 That claim a long eternity to bloom
 Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's
 tomb!

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous Faucy scope,
 And stretch a bold hand to the awful veil
 That hides futurity from anxious hope,
 Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
 And painting Europe rousing at the tale
 Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurl'd,
 While kindling Nations buckle on their mail,
 And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings un-
 furl'd,
 To freedom and revenge awakes an injured World.

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
 Since Fate has mark'd futurity her own:—
 Yet Fate resigns to Worth the glorious past,
 The deeds recorded and the laurels won.
 Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
 King, Prelate, all the phantasms of my brain,
 Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
 Yet grant for faith, for valour, and for Spain,
 One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain.

CONCLUSION.

I.

"Who shall command Estrella's mountain-tide
 Back to the source, when tempest-chafed, to hie?
 Who, when Gascogne's vexed gulf is raging wide,
 Shall hush it as a nurse her infant's cry?
 His magic power let such vain boaster try,
 And when the torrent shall his voice obey,
 And Biscay's whirlwinds list his lullaby,
 Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles' way,
 And they shall heed his voice, and at his bidding
 stay.

II.

"Else, ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers
 They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
 And their own sea hath whelm'd yon red-cross
 Power!"—
 Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock,
 To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's leader spoke.
 While downward on the land his legions press,
 Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
 And smiled like Eden in her summer dress;—
 Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.*

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
 Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the
 land,
 Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword,
 Though Britons arm, and WELLINGTON com-
 mand!
 No: grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
 An adamantine barrier to his force!
 And from its base shall wheel his shatter'd band
 As from the unshaken rock the torrent hoarse
 Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious
 course.

* I have ventured to apply to the movements of the French army that sublime passage in the prophecies of Joel, Chap. ii. 3. "A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness, yea, and nothing shall escape them."

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk
 Hath on his best and bravest made her food,
 In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk
 His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil and blood :
 For full in view the promised conquest stood,
 And Lisbon's matrons, from their walls, might
 sum
 The myriads that had half the world subdued,
 And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
 That bids the band of France to storm and havoc
 come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly roll'd,
 Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
 As famish'd wolves survey a guarded fold—
 But in the middle path, a Lion lay !
 At length they move—but not to battle-fray,
 Nor blaze yon fires where meets the manly fight ;
 Beacons of infamy, they light the way,
 Where cowardice and cruelty unite,
 To damn with double shame their ignominious flight !

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and wrath !
 Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be forgot,
 What wanton horrors mark'd their wrackful path !
 The peasant butcher'd in his ruin'd cot,
 The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
 Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
 Woman to infamy ; no crime forgot,
 By which inventive dæmons might proclaim
 Immortal hate to Man, and scorn of God's great
 name !

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
 With horror paused to view the havoc done,
 Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn,*
 Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasp'd his gun.

* Even the unexampled gallantry of the British army in the campaign of 1810-11, although they never fought but to conquer,

Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peaceful son
 Exult the debt of sympathy to pay ;
 Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
 Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
 Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worth-
 less lay.

VIII.

But thou—unfoughten wilt thou yield to Fate,
 Minion of Fortune, now miscall'd in vain !
 Can vantage-ground no confidence create,
 Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's mountain chain ?
 Vain-glorious Fugitive ? yet turn again !
 Behold, where, named by some Prophetic Seer,
 Flows Honour's Fountain,* as fore-doom'd the
 stain
 From thy dishonour'd name and arms to clear—
 Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem her favour
 here †

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid :
 Those chief that never heard the Lion roar !
 Within whose souls lives not a trace portray'd,
 Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore !
 Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more ;
 Of war's fell stratagems exhaust the whole ;
 Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour,
 Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,
 And weary out his arm—thou canst not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's shore,
 Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's plain,
 And front the flying thunders as they roar,
 With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain !
 And what avails thee that, for Cameron slain,
 Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given—‡

will do them less honour in history than their humanity to the
 famished Spaniards, whom they fed as well as defended, even
 when they were themselves reduced to short allowance.

* The literal translation of *Fuentes d' Honoro*.

† Massena, frequently called the Spoil child of Victory.

‡ The gallant Colonel Cameron was wounded mortally during
 the desperate contest in the streets of the village called Fuentes

Vengeance and grief gave mountain rage the rein,
 And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
 Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of
 heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled Boaster! teach thy haughty mood
 To plead at thine imperious master's throne!
 Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood,
 Deceived his hopes, and frustrated thine own;
 Say, that thine utmost skill and valour shown
 By British skill and valour were outvied;
 Last say, thy conqueror was WELLINGTON!
 And if he chafe, be his own fortune tried—
 God and our cause to friend, the venture we'll abide.

XII.

But ye, the heroes of that well-fought day,
 How shall a bard, unknowing and unknown,
 His meed to each victorious leader pay,
 Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
 Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone,
 O'er the wide sea to hail CADOGAN brave;
 And he, perchance, the minstrel note might own,
 Mindful of meeting brief that Fortune gave
 'Mid yon far western isles, that hear the Atlantic
 rave.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
 To give each Chief and every field its fame:
 Hark! Albuera thunders BERESFORD,
 And red Barossa shouts for dauntless GRÆME!
 O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
 Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
 To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
 For never, upon gory battle-ground,
 With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver
 victors crowned!

d'Honoro. He fell at the head of his native Highlanders, the 71st and 79th, who raised a dreadful shriek of grief and rage. They charged, with irresistible fury, the finest body of French grenadiers ever seen, being a part of Buonaparte's selected guard, and bore them out of the contested ground at the point of the bayonet.

XIV.

O who shall grudge him *Albuera's* bays,
 Who brought a race regenerate to the field,
 Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
 Temper'd their headlong rage, their courage
 steel'd,*
 And raised fair *Lusitania's* fallen shield,
 And gave new edge to *Lusitania's* sword,
 And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield—
 Shiver'd my harp, and burst its every chord,
 'Tis not thy worth, victorious *BERESFORD!*

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
 Though *Gaul's* proud legions roll'd like mist
 away,
 Was half his self-devoted valour shown,—
 He gaged but life on that illustrious day;
 But when he toil'd those squadrons to array,
 Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
 Sharper than Polish pike or assagay,
 He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
 And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's
 fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpass'd who strove to hide
 Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
 Whose wish, Heaven for his country's weal denied;
 Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
 From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets
 sound,
 The wanderer went; yet, *Caledonia!* still
 Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;
 He dreamed 'mid Alpine cliffs of *Athole's* hill,
 And heard in *Ebro's* roar his *Lyndoch's* lovely rill.

* Field-Marshal Beresford, was contented to undertake all the hazard of obloquy which might have been founded upon any miscarriage in the highly important experiment of training the Portuguese troops to an improved state of discipline. His generous devotedness was amply rewarded by the conduct and valour of the soldiers during the whole course of the war.

XVII.

O hero of a race renown'd of old,
 Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,*
 Since first distinguish'd in the onset bold,
 Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
 By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
 Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber own'd its fame,
 Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
 But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
 Than when wild Ronda learn'd the conquering
 shout of GRÆME!

XVIII.

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark,
 (With Spenser's parable I close my tale)
 By shoal and rock hath steer'd my venturous bark;
 And land-ward now I drive before the gale,
 And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
 And nearer now I see the port expand,
 And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
 And, as the prow light touches on the strand,
 I strike my red-cross flag, and bind my skiff to land.

* This stanza alludes to the various achievements of the warlike family of Græme, or Grahame. They are said, to have descended from the Scottish chief, under whose command his countrymen stormed the wall built by the Emperor Severus. Sir John the Grahame, "the hardy wight and wise," is well known as the friend of Sir William Wallace. Alderne, Kilsyth, and Tibbermuir, were scenes of the victories of the heroic Marquis of Montrose. The pass of Killy-krankie is famous for the action between King William's forces and the Highlanders in 1689.

"Where glæd Dundee in faint huzzas expired."

ROKEBY;

A Poem,

IN SIX CANTOS.

TO
JOHN R. S. MORRITT, Esq.
THIS POEM,
THE SCENE OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL
DEMESNE OF ROKEBY,
IS INSCRIBED,
IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,
BY
WALTER SCOTT
Dec. 31, 1812.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE scene of this poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, and shifts to the adjacent fortress of Barnard Castle, and to other places in that vicinity.

The time occupied by the action is a space of five days, three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great battle of Marston Moor, 3d July, 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the fictitious narrative now presented to the Public

R. O K E B Y.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud ;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,
She changes as a guilty dream,
When Conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow ;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.
Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
Sees the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round,

* The once magnificent fortress of Barnard Castle derives its name from its founder, Barnard Baliol, the ancestor of the short and unfortunate dynasty of that name, which succeeded to the Scottish throne under the patronage of Edward I. and Edward III. Baliol's Tower, afterwards mentioned in the poem, is a round tower of great size, situated at the western extremity of the building. The prospect from the top of the Tower commands a rich and magnificent view of the wooded valley of the Tees.

II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
 Throw murky shadows on the stream,
 Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
 The emotions of whose troubl'd breast,
 In wild and strange confusion driven,
 Rival the flitting rack of heaven.
 Ere sleep stern OSWALD'S senses tied,
 Oft had he chang'd his weary side,
 Compos'd his limbs and vainly sought
 By effort strong to banish thought.
 Sleep came at length, but with a train
 Of feelings true and fancies vain,
 Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
 The expected future with the past.
 Conscience, anticipating time,
 Already rues the enacted crime,
 And calls her furies forth, to shake
 The sounding scourge and hissing snake;
 While her poor victim's outward throes
 Bear witness to his mental woes,
 And show what lesson may be read
 Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
 Strange changes in his sleeping face,
 Rapid and ominous as these
 With which the moonbeams tinge the Tees.
 There might be seen of shame the blush,
 There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
 While the perturbed sleeper's hand
 Seem'd grasping dagger-knife, or brand.
 Relax'd that grasp, the heavy sigh,
 The tear in the half-opening eye,
 The pallid cheek and brow confess'd
 That grief was busy in his breast;
 Nor paus'd that mood—a sudden start
 Impell'd the life-blood from the heart:
 Features convuls'd, and mutterings dread,
 Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
 That pang the painful slumber broke,
 And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and fear'd again to close
 His eyelids in such dire repose ;
 He woke,— to watch the lamp, and tell
 From hour to hour the castle-bell.
 Or listen to the owlet's cry,
 Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
 Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
 With which the warder cheats the time,
 And envying think, how, when the sun
 Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
 Couch'd on his straw, and fancy-free,
 He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far town-ward sounds a distant tread,
 And Oswald, starting from his bed,
 Hath caught it, though no human ear,
 Unsharpen'd by revenge and fear,
 Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
 Until it reach'd the castle bank.
 Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
 The warder's challenge now he hears,
 Then clanking chains and levers tell,
 That o'er the moat the drawbridge fell,
 And, in the castle court below,
 Voices are heard, and torches glow,
 As marshalling the stranger's way,
 Straight for the room where Oswald lay
 The cry was,—“ Tidings from the host,
 Of weight—a messenger comes post.”
 Stifling the tumult of his breast,
 His answer Oswald thus express'd --
 “ Bring food and wine, and trim the fire ;
 Admit the stranger, and retire.”

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
 The morion's plumes his visage hide,
 And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
 Mantles his form's gigantic mould.*

* The use of complete suits of armour was fallen into disuse during the Civil War, though they were still worn by leaders of rank and importance. Buff-coats continued to be worn by the city trained-bands till near the middle of the last century.

Full slender answer deigned he
To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
But mark'd, by a disdainful smile,
He saw and scorn'd the petty wile,
When Oswald chang'd the torch's place,
Anxious that on the soldier's face
Its partial lustre might be thrown,
To show his looks, yet hide his own.
His guest, the while, laid low aside
The ponderous cloak of tough bull's hide,
And to the torch glanc'd broad and clear
The corslet of a cuirassier ;
Then from his brows the casque he drew,
And from the dank plume dash'd the dew,
From gloves of mail reliev'd his hands,
And spread them to the kindling brands,
And, turning to the genial board,
Without a health, or pledge, or word
Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed ;
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famish'd wolf that tears his prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
And quaff the full carouse, that lent
His brow a fiercer hardiment.
Now Oswald stood a space aside,
Now pac'd the room with hasty stride,
In feverish agony to learn
Tidings of deep and dread concern,
Cursing each moment that his guest
Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
Yet viewing with alarm, at last,
The end of that uncouth repast,
Almost he seem'd their haste to rue,
As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
And left him with the stranger, free
To question of his mystery.
Then did his silence long proclaim
A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mien appears,
 To justify suspicious fears.
 On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time,
 Roughen'd the brow, the temples bar'd,
 And sable hairs with silver shar'd,
 Yet left—what age alone could tame—
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame ;
 The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
 The eye, that seem'd to scorn the world.
 That lip had terror never blench'd ;
 Ne'er in that eye hath tear-drop quench'd
 The flash severe of swarthy glow,
 That mock'd at pain, and knew not woe.
 Inur'd to danger's direst form,
 Tornade and earthquake, flood and storm,
 Death had he seen by sudden blow,
 By wasting plague, by tortures slow,*
 By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
 Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM's harden'd look
 Unmov'd could blood and danger brook,
 Still worse than apathy had place
 On his swart brow and callous face ;
 For evil passions, cherish'd long,
 Had plough'd them with impression strong.
 All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
 Light folly, past with youth away,
 But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
 The weeds of vice without their flower.
 And yet the soil in which they grew,
 Had it been tam'd when life was new,
 Had depth and vigour to bring forth
 The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.

* The successes of the English in the predatory incursions upon Spanish America, during the reign of Elizabeth, had never been forgotten; and, from that period downward, the exploits of Drake and Raleigh were imitated, upon a smaller scale indeed, but with equally desperate valour, by small bands of pirates, gathered from all nations, but chiefly French and English. The character of Bertram is copied from those qualities by which the bucaniers were generally distinguished.

Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
 The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
 But lavish waste had been refus'd
 To bounty in his chasten'd mind,
 And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
 Been lost in love of glory's meed,
 And, frantic then no more, his pride
 Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
 Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,
 Still knew his daring soul to soar,
 And mastery o'er the mind he bore;
 For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
 Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
 And this felt Oswald, while in vain
 He strove, by many a winding train,
 To lure his sullen guest to show,
 Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,
 While on far other subject hung
 His heart, than falter'd from his tongue.
 Yet nought for that his guest did deign
 To note or spare his secret pain,
 But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
 Return'd him answer dark and short,
 Or started from the theme, to range
 In loose digression wild and strange,
 And forc'd the embarrass'd host to buy,
 By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glaz'd upon the cause
 Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
 And Church Reform'd—but felt rebu
 Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,
 Then stammer'd—"Has a field been fought?
 Has Bertram news of battle brought?
 For sure a soldier, famed so far
 In foreign fields for feats of war,
 On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
 Until the field were won and lost."

" Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
 You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease ;
 Why deem it strange that others come
 To share such safe and easy home,
 From fields where danger, death and toil,
 Are the reward of civil broil ?"—
 " Nay, mock not, friend ! since well we know
 The near advances of the foe,
 How mar our northern army's work,
 Encamp'd before beleagu'er'd York ;
 Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
 And must have fought—how went the day ?"—

XII.

" Wouldst hear the tale ?—On Marston heath
 Met, front to front, the ranks of death ;
 Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now
 Fir'd was each eye, and flush'd each brow ;
 On either side loud clamours ring,
 ' God and the Cause !—' God and the King !'
 Right English all, they rush'd to blows,
 With nought to win, and all to lose.
 I could have laugh'd—but lack'd the time—
 To see, in phrenesy sublime,
 How the fierce zealots fought and bled,
 For king or state, as humour led ;
 Some for a dream of public good,
 Some for church-tippet, gown and hood,
 Draining their veins, in death to claim
 A patriot's or a martyr's name—
 Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
 That counter'd there on adverse parts,
 No superstitious fool had I
 Sought El Dorados in the sky !
 Chili had heard me through her states,
 And Lima op'd her silver gates,
 Rich Mexico I had march'd through,
 And sack'd the splendours of Peru,
 Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
 And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame."—
 " Still from the purpose wilt thou stray !
 Good gentle friend, how went the day ?"

XIII.

" Good am I deem'd at trumpet-sound,
 And good where goblets dance the round,
 Though gentle ne'er was join'd, till now,
 With rugged Bertram's breast and brow.—
 But I resume. The battle's rage
 Was like the strife which currents wage
 Where Orinoco, in his pride,
 Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
 But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
 A rival sea of roaring war ;
 While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
 The billows fling their foam to heaven,
 And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
 Where rolls the river, where the main.
 Even thus upon the bloody field,
 The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
 Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
 Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
 Hurling against our spears a line
 Of gallants, fiery as their wine ;
 Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
 In zeal's despite began to reel.
 What wouldst thou more?—in tumult tost,
 Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
 A thousand men, who drew the sword
 For both the Houses and the Word,
 Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
 To curb the crosier and the crown,
 Now, stark and stiff, lie stretch'd in gore,
 And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
 Thus far'd it, when I left the fight,
 With the good Cause and Commons' right."—

XIV.

" Disastrous news !" dark Wycliffe said ;
 Assum'd despondence bent his head,
 While troubl'd joy was in his eye,
 The well-feign'd sorrow to belie.—
 " Disastrous news !—when needed most,
 Told ye not that your chiefs were lost ?

Complete the woful tale, and say,
 Who fell upon that fatal day;
 What leaders of repute and name
 Bought by their death a deathless fame.
 If such my direst foeman's doom,
 My tears shall dew his honour'd tomb.—
 No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
 Thou know'st whom I should hate the most,
 Whom thou too, once, were wont to hate,
 Yet leav'st me doubtful of his fate.”—
 With look unmov'd,—“Of friend or foe,
 Aught,” answer'd Bertram, “wouldst thou know,
 Demand in simple terms and plain,
 A soldier's answer shalt thou gain;
 For question dark, or riddle high,
 I have nor judgment nor reply.”

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppress'd,
 Now blaz'd at once in Wycliffe's breast;
 And brave, from man so meanly born,
 Rous'd his hereditary scorn.
 “Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
 PHILIP OF MORTHAM, lives he yet?
 False to thy patron or thine oath,
 Trait'rous or perjurd, one or both.
 Slave! hast thou kept thy promise-plight,
 To slay thy leader in the fight?”
 Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
 And Wycliffe's hand he strongly wrung;
 His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
 Forc'd the red blood-drop from the nail—
 “A health!” he cried; and, ere he quaff'd,
 Flung from him Wycliffe's hand, and laugh'd:
 —“Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy heart!
 Now play'st thou well thy genuine part!
 Worthy, but for thy craven fear,
 Like me to roam a bucanier.
 What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,
 If Mortham's wealth and lands be thine?
 What car'st thou for beleaguer'd York,
 If this good hand have done its work?”

Or what though Fairfax and his best
 Are reddening Marston's swarthy breast,
 If Philip Mortham with them lie,
 Lending his life-blood to the dye?—
 Sit, then! and as mid comrades free
 Carousing after victory,
 When tales are told of blood and fear,
 That boys and women shrink to hear,
 From point to point I frankly tell
 The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

“When purpos'd vengeance I forego,
 Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;
 And when an insult I forgive,
 Then brand me as a slave, and live!—
 Philip of Mortham is with those
 Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
 Or whom more sure revenge attends,
 If number'd with ungrateful friends.
 As was his wont, ere battle glow'd,
 Along the marshall'd ranks he rode,
 And wore his visor up the while.
 I saw his melancholy smile,
 When, full oppos'd in front, he knew
 Where ROKEBY's kindred banner flew.
 ‘And thus,’ he said, ‘will friends divide!’—
 I heard, and thought how, side by side,
 We two had turn'd the battle's tide,
 In many a well-debated field,
 Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
 I thought on Darien's deserts pale,
 Where death bestrides the evening gale,
 How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,
 And fenceless fac'd the deadly dew;
 I thought on Quariana's cliff,
 Where, rescu'd from our foundering skiff,
 Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
 Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
 And when his side an arrow found,
 I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound.
 These thoughts like torrents rush'd along,
 To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

"Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
 Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
 When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
 Be near him in the battle's roar,
 I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
 I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
 Lost was the war in inward strife,
 Debating Mortham's death or life.
 'Twas then, I thought, how, lur'd to come,
 As partner of his wealth and home,
 Years of piratic wand'ring o'er,
 With him I sought our native shore.
 But Mortham's lord grew far estrang'd
 From the bold heart with whom he rang'd;
 Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
 Sadden'd and dimm'd descending years;
 The wily priests their victim sought,
 And damn'd each free-born deed and thought.
 Then must I seek another home,
 My license shook his sober dome;
 If gold he gave, in one wild day
 I revell'd thrice the sum away.
 An idle outcast then I stray'd,
 Unfit for tillage or for trade.
 Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
 Useless and dangerous at once.
 The women fear'd my hardy look,
 At my approach the peaceful shook;
 The merchant saw my glance of flame,
 And lock'd his hoards when Bertram came;
 Each child of coward peace kept far
 From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

"But civil discord gave the call,
 And made my trade the trade of all.
 By Mortham urg'd, I came again
 His vassals to the fight to train.
 What guerdon waited on my care?
 I could not cant of creed or prayer;
 Sour fanatics each trust obtain'd,
 And I, dishonour'd and disdain'd,

Gain'd but the high and happy lot,
 In these poor arms to front the shot!—
 All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
 Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
 'Tis honour bids me now relate
 Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

"Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part,
 Glance quick as lightning through the heart.
 As my spur press'd my courser's side,
 Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
 And, ere the charging squadrons mix'd,
 His plea was cast, his doom was fix'd.
 I watch'd him through the doubtful fray,
 That chang'd as March's moody day,
 Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
 Fierce Rupert thunder'd on our flank.
 'Twas then, midst tumult, smoke, and strife,
 Where each man fought for death or life,
 'Twas then I fir'd my petronel,
 And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
 One dying look he upward cast,
 Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
 Think not that there I stopp'd to view
 What of the battle should ensue;
 But ere I clear'd that bloody press,
 Our northern horse ran masterless;
 Monckton and Mitton told the news,*
 How troops of roundheads chok'd the Ouse,
 And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
 Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
 Cursing the day when zeal or meed
 First lur'd their Lesley o'er the Tweed.
 Yet when I reach'd the banks of Swale,
 Had rumour learn'd another tale;
 With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
 Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day;†
 But whether false the news, or true,
 Oswald, I reckon as light as you."

* Monckton and Mitton are villages near the river Ouse, and not very distant from the field of battle.

† Cromwell, with his regiment of cuirassiers, had a principal share in turning the fate of the day at Marston Moor.

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
 How his pride startled at the tone
 In which his complice, fierce and free,
 Asserted guilt's equality.
 In smoothest terms his speech he wove,
 Of endless friendship, faith, and love;
 Promis'd and vow'd in courteous sort,
 But Bertram broke professions short.
 "Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
 No, scarcely till the rising day;
 Warn'd by the legends of my youth,
 I trust not an associate's truth.
 Do not my native dales prolong
 Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
 Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
 By Girsonfield, that treach'rous Hall?*"
 Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,
 The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
 And near the spot that gave me name,
 The moated mound of Risingham,†
 Where Reed upon her margin sees
 Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
 Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
 An outlaw's image on the stone;
 Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
 With quiver'd back, and kirtled knee.
 Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
 The tameless monarch of the wold,

* According to the border legend, Percival Reed, Esquire, a keeper of Reedsdale, was betrayed by the Halls (hence denominated the false-hearted Ha's) to a band of moss-troopers of the name of Crosier, who slew him at Batinghope, near the source of the Reed. The ghost of the murdered borderer was supposed to haunt the banks of a brook called the Pringle.

† Risingham, upon the river Reed, near the beautiful hamlet of Woodburn, is an ancient Roman station, formerly called *Habitancum*. About half a mile distant from Risingham, upon an eminence covered with scattered birch-trees and fragments of rock, there is cut upon a large rock, in *alto relievo*, a remarkable figure, called Robin of Risingham, or Robin of Reedsdale. The popular tradition is, that it represents a giant, whose brother resided at Woodburn, and he himself at Risingham. It adds, that they subsisted by hunting, and that one of them, finding the game become too scarce to support them, poisoned his companion, to whose memory the monument was engraved.

And age and infancy can tell,
 By brother's treachery he fell.
 Thus warn'd by legends of my youth,
 I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

"When last we reason'd of this deed,
 Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
 Or by what rule, or when, or where,
 The wealth of Mortham we should share;
 Then list, while I the portion name,
 Our differing laws give each to claim.
 Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
 Her rules of heritage must own;
 They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
 Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
 And these I yield:—do thou revere
 The statutes of the Bucanier.*
 Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
 To all that on her waves are borne,
 When falls a mate in battle broil,
 His comrade heirs his portion'd spoil;
 When dies in fight a daring foe,
 He claims his wealth who struck the blow;
 And either rule to me assigns
 Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
 Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark;
 Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
 Chalice and plate from churches borne,
 And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
 Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
 And all the wealth of western war.
 I go to search, where, dark and deep,
 Those Trans-atlantic treasures sleep.

* The "statutes of the Bucaniers" were, in reality, more equitable than could have been expected. When the expedition was completed, the fund of prize-money acquired was thrown together, and the owners of the vessel had then their share assigned for the expenses of the outfit. The surgeon's and carpenter's salaries, with the price of provisions and ammunition, were also defrayed. Then followed the compensation due to the maimed and wounded, rated according to the damage they had sustained. After this act of justice and humanity, the remainder of the booty was divided into as many shares as there were Bucaniers.

Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
 The heir will scarce find entrance free ;
 And then farewell. I haste to try
 Each varied pleasure wealth can buy ;
 When cloy'd each wish, these wars afford
 Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
 On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
 Despite his craft, he heard with awe
 This ruffian stabber fix the law ;
 While his own troubled passions veer
 Through hatred, joy, regret, and fear :—
 Joy'd at the soul that Bertram flies,
 He grudg'd the murderer's mighty prizè,
 Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
 And fear'd to wend with him alone.
 At length, that middle course to steer,
 To cowardice and craft so dear,
 " His charge," he said, " would ill allow
 His absence from the fortress now ;
 WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
 His son should journey with his friend."

XXIII.

Contempt kept Bertram's anger down,
 And wreath'd to savage smile his frown.
 " Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to me,
 Whichever bears the golden key.
 Yet think not but I mark, and smile
 To mark, thy poor and selfish wile !
 If injury from me you fear,
 What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee here ?
 I've sprung from walls more high than these,
 I've swam through deeper streams than Tees.
 Might I not stab thee ere one yell
 Could rouse the distant sentinel ?
 Start not—it is not my design,
 But, if it were, weak fence were thine ;
 And, trust me, that, in time of need,
 This hand hath done more desp'rate deed.
 Go, haste and rouse thy slumb'ring son ;
 Time calls, and I must needs be gone."

XXIV.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
 Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart ;
 A heart too soft from early life
 To hold with fortune needful strife.
 His sire, while yet a hardier race
 Of num'rous sons were Wycliffe's grace,
 On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
 For feeble heart and forceless hand ;
 But a fond mother's care and joy
 Were centred in her sickly boy.
 No touch of childhood's frolic mood
 Show'd the elastic spring of blood ;
 Hour after hour he lov'd to pore
 On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
 But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
 From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
 To ponder Jacques' moral strain,
 And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain ;
 And weep himself to soft repose
 O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
 By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
 But loved the quiet joys that wake
 By lonely stream and silent lake ;
 In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
 Where all is cliff and copse and sky ;
 To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
 Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
 Such was he wont ; and there his dream
 Soar'd on some wild fantastic theme,
 Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
 Till Contemplation's wearied wing
 The enthusiast could no more sustain,
 And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He lov'd—as many a lay can tell,
 Preserv'd in Stanmore's lonely dell.
 For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
 The art unteachable, untaught ;

He lov'd—his soul did nature frame
 For love, and fancy nurs'd the flame;
 Vainly he lov'd—for seldom swain
 Of such soft mould is lov'd again;
 Silent he lov'd—in every gaze
 Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
 So mus'd his life away—till died
 His brethren all, their father's pride.
 Wilfrid is now the only heir
 Of all his stratagems and care,
 And destin'd, darkling, to pursue
 Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
 Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
 To love her was an easy hest,
 The secret empress of his breast;
 To woo her was a harder task
 To one that durst not hope or ask.
 Yet all Matilda could, she gave
 In pity to her gentle slave;
 Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
 And praise, the poet's best reward!
 She read the tales his taste approv'd,
 And sung the lays he fram'd or lov'd;
 Yet, loath to nurse the fatal flame
 Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
 In kind caprice she oft withdrew
 The fav'ring glance to friendship due,
 Then griev'd to see her victim's pain,
 And gave the dang'rous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
 When war's loud summons wak'd the land.
 Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
 The wo-foreboding peasant sees;
 In concert oft they brav'd of old
 The bordering Scot's incursion bold:
 Frowning defiance in their pride,
 Their vassals now and lords divide.

From his fair hall on Greta banks,
 The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
 To aid the valiant northern Earls,
 Who drew the sword for royal Charles.
 Mortham, by marriage near allied,—
 His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
 Though long before the civil fray,
 In peaceful grave the lady lay.—
 Philip of Mortham rais'd his band,
 And march'd at Fairfax's command;
 While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
 Of kindred art with wily Vane,
 Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
 Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
 Secur'd them with the Lunedale powers,
 And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
 Waits in his halls the event of fight;
 For England's war rever'd the claim
 Of every unprotected name,
 And spar'd, amid its fiercest rage,
 Childhood and womanhood and age.
 But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
 Must the dear privilege forego,
 By Greta's side, in evening grey,
 To steal upon Matilda's way,
 Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
 For careless step and vacant eye;
 Calming each anxious look and glance,
 To give the meeting all to chance,
 Or framing as a fair excuse,
 The book, the pencil, or the muse;
 Something to give, to sing, to say,
 Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
 Then, while the long'd-for minutes last,—
 Ah! minutes quickly over-past!—
 Recording each expression free,
 Of kind or careless courtesy,
 Each friendly look, each softer tone,
 As food for fancy when alone.

All this is o'er—but still, unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every sound.
She comes!—'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not—He will wait the hour.
When her lamp lightens in the tow'r;
'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
"What is my life, my hope?" he said;
"Alas! a transitory shade."

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason strove
For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turn'd impatient ear
From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
Gentle, indiff'rent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmov'd he view'd
Each outward change of ill and good:
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward child;
In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,
Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bath'd in her dews his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes, can ne'er forego,
And plac'd him in her circle, free
From every stern reality.
Till, to the Visionary, seem
Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth, whom Fancy gains,
Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
Pity and woe! for such a mind
Is soft contemplative, and kind;

And woe to those who train such youth,
 And spare to press the rights of truth,
 The mind to strengthen and anneal,
 While on the stithy glows the steel!
 O teach him, while your lessons last
 To judge the present by the past;
 Remind him of each wish pursued,
 How rich it glow'd with promis'd good:
 Remind him of each wish enjoy'd,
 How soon his hopes possession cloy'd!
 Tell him, we play unequal game,
 Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim!
 And, ere he strip him for her race,
 Show the conditions of the chase.
 Two sisters by the goal are set,
 Cold Disappointment and Regret;
 One disenchants the winner's eyes,
 And strips of all its worth the prize.
 While one augments its gaudy show
 More to enhance the loser's woe.
 The victor sees his fairy gold,
 Transform'd, when won, to drossy mould,
 But still the vanquish'd mourns his loss,
 And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.

More wouldst thou know—yon tower survey,
 Yon couch unpress'd since parting day,
 Yon untrimm'd lamp, whose yellow gleam,
 Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
 And yon thin form!—the hectic red
 On his pale cheek unequal spread;
 The head reclin'd, the loosen'd hair,
 The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.—
 See, he looks up;—a woful smile
 Lightens his wo-worn cheek a while,—
 'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
 To gild the ruin she has wrought;
 For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
 Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
 And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
 She drinks his life-blood from the vein.

Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
 Vain hope! to see the sun arise.
 The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
 Still! howls by fits the stormy blast;
 Another hour must wear away,
 Ere the East kindle into day;
 And hark! to waste that weary hour,
 He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.

SONG.

TO THE MOON.

Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
 Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
 Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
 Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!
 How should thy pure and peaceful eye
 Untroubled view our scenes below,
 Or how a tearless beam supply
 To light a world of war and wo!

Fair Queen! I will not blame thee now,
 As once by Greta's fairy side;
 Each little cloud that dimm'd thy brow
 Did then an angel's beauty hide.
 And of the shades I then could chide,
 Still are the thoughts to mem'ry dear,
 For, while a softer strain I tried,
 They hid my blush, and calm'd my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
 Was form'd to light some lonely dell,
 By two fond lovers only seen,
 Reflected from the crystal well,
 Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
 Or quivering on the lattice bright,
 Or glancing on their couch, to tell
 How swiftly wanes the summer night!

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour!
 A voice!—his father seeks the tow'r,

With haggard look and troubled sense,
 Fresh from his dreadful conference.
 "Wilfrid!—what, not to sleep address'd?
 Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
 Mortham has fall'n on Marston-moor;
 Bertram brings warrant to secure
 His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
 For the state's use and public good.
 The menials will thy voice obey;
 Let his commission have its way,
 In every point, in every word."—
 Then, in a whisper,—"Take thy sword!
 Bertram is—what I must not tell.
 I hear his hasty step—farewell!"

 CANTO SECOND.

I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,
 The gale had sigh'd itself to rest;
 The moon was cloudless now and clear,
 But pale, and soon to disappear.
 The thin grey clouds wax dimly light
 On Brusleton and Houghton height;
 And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
 Waited the wakening touch of day,
 To give its woods and cultur'd plain,
 And tow'rs and spires, to light again.
 But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless swell,
 And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
 And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
 And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;
 While, as a livelier twilight falls,
 Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd walls
 High crown'd he sits, in dawning pale,
 The sovereign of the lovely vale.

II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,
 Gleam gradual on the warder's eye!

Far sweeping to the east, he sees
 Down his deep woods the course of Tees,
 And tracks his wand'rings by the steam
 Of summer vapours from the stream ;
 And ere he pace his destin'd hour
 By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
 These silver mists shall melt away,
 And dew the woods with glitt'ring spray.
 Then in broad lustre shall be shown
 That mighty trench of living stone,
 And each huge trunk that, from the side,
 Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,
 Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
 Wears with his rage no common foe ;
 For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
 Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career.
 Condemn'd to mine a channell'd way,
 O'er solid sheets of marble grey.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
 Shall rush upon the ravish'd sight ;
 But many a tributary stream
 Each from its own dark dell shall gleam .
 Staindrop, who, from her silvan bowers
 Salutes proud Raby's battled towers ;
 The rural brook of Egliston,
 And Balder, nam'd from Odin's son ;
 And Greta, to whose banks ere long
 We lead the lovers of the song ;
 And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
 And fairy Thorsgill's murm'ring child,
 And last and least, but loveliest still,
 Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.
 Who in that dim-wood glen hath stray'd,
 Yet long'd for Roslin's magic glade ?
 Who wand'ring there, hath sought to change,
 Ev'n for that vale so stern and strange,
 Where Cartland's Crag, fantastic rent,
 Through her green copse like spires are sent ?
 Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
 Thy scenes and story to combine !

Thou bidd'st him, who by Roslin strays,
 List to the deeds of other days ;
 'Mid Cartland's Crag thou show'st the cave,
 The refuge of thy champion brave ;*
 Giving each rock its storied tale,
 Pouring a lay for every dale,
 Knitting, as with a moral band,
 Thy native legends with thy land,
 To lend each scene the int'rest high
 Which genius beams from Beauty's eye.

IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight
 Which sun-rise shows from Barnard's height,
 But from the tow'rs, preventing day,
 With Wilfrid took his early way,
 While misty dawn, and noonbeam pale,
 Still mingled in the silent dale.
 By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
 The southern bank of Tees they won ;
 Their winding path then eastward cast,
 And Egliston's grey ruins pass'd ;
 Each on his own deep visions bent,
 Silent and sad they onward went.
 Well may you think that Bertram's mood,
 To Wilfrid savage seem'd and rude ;
 Well may you think bold Risingham
 Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame ;
 And small the intercourse, I ween,
 Such uncongenial souls between.

V.

Stern Bertram shunn'd the nearer way,
 Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay,
 And, skirting high the valley's ridge,
 They cross'd by Greta's ancient bridge.
 Descending where her waters wind
 Free for a space and unconfined,
 As, 'scap'd from Brignall's dark-wood glen,
 She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.

* Cartland Crag, near Lanark, celebrated as among the famous
 retreats of Sir William Wallace.

There, as his eye glanc'd o'er the mound,
 Rais'd by that Legion long renown'd,
 Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
 Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
 "Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid sigh'd,
 "Behold the boast of Roman pride!
 What now of all your toils are known?
 A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
 This to himself; for moral strain
 To Bertram were address'd in vain.

VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh
 Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high*
 Were northward in the dawning seen
 To rear them o'er the thicket green.
 O then, though Spenser's self had stray'd
 Beside him through the lovely glade,
 Lending his rich luxuriant glow
 Of Fancy, all its charms to show
 Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
 As captive set at liberty,
 Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
 And clam'ring joyful on her road;
 Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
 The trees retire in scatter'd ranks,
 Save where, advanc'd before the rest,
 On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
 Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
 As champions, when their band is broke,
 Stand forth to guard the rearward post.
 The bulwark of the scatter'd host—
 All this, and more, might Spenser say,
 Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
 While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
 Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

VII.

The open vale is soon pass'd o'er,
 Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;

* This ancient manor long gave name to a family by whom it is said to have been possessed from the Conquest downward, and who are at different times distinguished in history. It was the Baron of Rokeby who finally defeated the insurrection of the Earl of Northumberland during the reign of Henry IV.

Sinking mid Greta's thickets deep,
 A wild and darker course they keep,
 A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
 As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode !
 Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
 Deeper and narrower grew the dell ;
 It seem'd some mountain rent and riven,
 A channel for the stream had given,
 So high the cliffs of limestone grey
 Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
 Yielding, along their rugged base,
 A flinty footpath's niggard space,
 Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
 May hear the headlong torrent rave,
 And like a steed in frantic fit,
 That flings the froth from curb and bit,
 May view her chafe her waves to spray,
 O'er every rock that bars her way,
 Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
 Thick as the schemes of human pride
 That down life's current drive amain,
 As frail, as frothy, and as vain !

VIII.

The cliffs that rear their haughty head
 High o'er the river's darksome bed,
 Were now all naked, wild, and grey
 Now waving all with greenwood spray ;
 Here trees to ev'ry crevice clung,
 And o'er the dell their branches hung ;
 And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
 The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven ;
 Oft, too, the ivy swath'd their breast,
 And wreath'd its garland round their crest,
 Or from the spires bade loosely flare
 Its tendrils in the middle air,
 As pennons wont to wave of old
 O'er the high feast of Baron bold,
 When revell'd loud the feudal rout,
 And the arch'd halls return'd their shout ;
 Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
 And such the echoes from her shore.

And so the ivied banners' gleam
Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,
But leave between no sunny mead,
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
Oft found by such a mountain strand;
Forming such warm and dry retreat,
As fancy deems the lonely seat,
Where hermit, wand'ring from his cell,
His rosary might love to tell.
But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
A dismal grove of sable yew,
With whose sad tints were mingled seen
The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
Seem'd that the trees their shadows cast
The earth that nourish'd them to blast;
For never knew that swarthy grove
The verdant hue that fairies love;
Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower,
Arose within its baleful bower;
The dank and sable earth receives
Its only carpet from the leaves,
That from the with'ring branches cast,
Bestrew'd the ground with every blast
Though now the sun was o'er the hill.
In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
Save that on Greta's farther side
Some straggling beams through copsewood glide;
And wild and savage contrast made
That dingle's deep and fun'ral shade,
With the bright tints of early day,
Which, glimm'ring through the ivy spray,
On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunn'd the dell;
For Superstition wout to tell
Of many a grisly sound and sight,
Scaring its path at dead of night.
When Christmas logs blaze high and wide,
Such wonders speed the festal tide;

While Curiosity and Fear,
 Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,
 Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,
 And village maidens lose the rose.
 The thrilling int'rest rises higher,
 The circle closes nigh and nigher,
 And shudd'ring glance is cast behind,
 As louder moans the wintry wind.
 Believe, that fitting scene was laid
 For such wild tales in Mortham glade;
 For who had seen, on Greta's side,
 By that dim light fierce Bertram stride,
 In such a spot, at such an hour,—
 If touch'd by Superstition's power,
 Might well have deem'd that Hell had given
 A murderer's ghost to upper heaven,
 While Wilfrid's form had seem'd to glide
 Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
 Are these unearthly terrors known;
 For not to rank nor sex confin'd
 Is this vain ague of the mind:
 Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
 'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barr'd,
 Have quak'd, like aspen leaves in May,
 Beneath its universal sway.
 Bertram had listed many a tale
 Of wonder in his native dale,
 That in his secret soul retain'd
 The credence they in childhood gain'd:
 Nor less his wild advent'rous youth
 Believ'd in every legend's truth;
 Learn'd when, beneath the tropic gale,
 Full swell'd the vessel's steady sail,
 And the broad Indian moon her light
 Pour'd on the watch of middle night,
 When seamen love to hear and tell
 Of portent, prodigy, and spell:
 What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,*
 How whistle rash bids tempests roar,

* The Lapland witches were famous for the sale of prosperous winds which they disposed of to credulous mariners.

Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite.
 Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light ;*
 Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
 Shoots like a meteor through the storm ;
 When the dark scud comes driving hard,
 And lower'd is every top-sail yard,
 And canvass wove in earthly looms,
 No more to brave the storm presumes !
 Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
 Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
 Full spread and crowded every sail,
 The Demon Frigate† braves the gale ;
 And well the doom'd spectators know
 The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
 Marvels and omens all their own ;
 How, by some desert isle or key,‡
 Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,
 Or where the savage pirate's mood
 Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
 Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear
 Appall'd the list'ning Bucanier,
 Whose light-arm'd shallop anchor'd lay
 In ambush by the lonely bay.
 The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,
 Ring from the moonlight groves of cane ;

* That these are general superstitions, is well known to all who have been on ship-board, or who have conversed with seamen. They farther assert, that Ericus, King of Sweden, was so familiar with the evil spirits, that which way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way.

† This is an allusion to a well-known nautical superstition concerning a fantastic vessel, called by sailors the Flying Dutchman, and supposed to be seen about the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope. She is distinguished from earthly vessels by bearing a press of sail when all others are unable, from stress of weather, to show an inch of canvass. The apparition of the ship is considered by the mariners as the worst of all possible omens.

‡ These keys are small sandy patches, appearing just above the surface of the ocean. As many of the atrocities which the bucaniers practised on their prisoners were committed in such spots, there are some of these keys which even now have an indifferent reputation among seamen, and where they are with difficulty prevailed on to remain ashore at night on account of the visionary terrors incident to places which have been thus contaminated.

The fierce advent'rer's heart they scare,
 Who wearies mem'ry for a prayer,
 Curses the road-stead, and with gale
 Of early morning lifts the sail,
 To give, in thirst of blood and prey
 A legend for another bay.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child
 Train'd in the mystic and the wild,
 With this on Bertram's soul at times
 Rush'd a dark feeling of his crimes ;
 Such to his troubled soul their form,
 As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
 And such their omen dim and dread,
 As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
 That pang, whose transitory force
 Hover'd 'twixt horror and remorse ;
 That pang, perchance, his bosom press'd,
 As Wilfrid sudden he address'd :—
 " Wilfrid, this glen is never trod
 Until the sun rides high abroad ;
 Yet twice have I beheld to-day
 A Form, that seem'd to dog our way ;
 Twice from my glance it seem'd to flee
 And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
 How think'st thou?—Is our path way-laid?
 Or hath thy sire my trust betray'd?
 If so"—Ere, starting from his dream,
 That turn'd upon a gentler theme,
 Wilfrid had rous'd him to reply,
 Bertram sprung forward, shouting high,
 " Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!"—
 And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,
 He shot him down the sounding path ;
 Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly out,
 To his loud step and savage shout.
 Seems that the object of his race
 Hath scal'd the cliffs ; his frantic chase
 Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
 Right up the rock's tall battlement ;

Straining each sinew to ascend,
 Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must lend.
 Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,
 Views, from beneath, his dreadful way:
 Now to the oak's warp'd roots he clings,
 Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;
 Now, like the wild goat, must he dare
 An unsupported leap in air;
 Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
 You mark him by the crashing bough,
 And by his corslet's sullen clank,
 And by the stones spurn'd from the bank,
 And by the hawk scar'd from her nest,
 And ravens' croaking o'er their guest,
 Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
 The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.

See, he emerges!—desp'rate now
 All farther course—Yon beetling brow,
 In craggy nakedness sublime,
 What heart or foot shall dare to climb?
 It bears no tendril for his clasp,
 Presents no angle to his grasp:
 Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
 Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
 Balanc'd on such precarious prop,
 He strains his grasp to reach the top.
 Just as the dang'rous stretch he makes,
 By heav'n, his faithless footstool shakes!
 Beneath his tott'ring bulk it bends,
 It sways,—it loosens,—it descends!
 And downward holds its headlong way,
 Crashing o'er rock and copsewood spray.
 Loud thunders shake the echoing dell!—
 Fell it alone?—alone it fell.
 Just on the very verge of fate,
 The hardy Bertram's falling weight
 He trusted to his sinewy hands,
 And on the top unharm'd he stands!

XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued;
 At intervals where, roughly hew'd,

Rude steps ascending from the dell
 Render'd the cliffs accessible.
 By circuit slow he thus attain'd
 The height that Risingham had gain'd,
 And when he issued from the wood,
 Before the gate of Mortham stood.*
 'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
 On battled tow'r and portal grey:
 And from the grassy slope he sees
 The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
 Where, issuing from her darksome bed,
 She caught the morning's eastern red,
 And through the soft'ning vale below
 Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
 All blushing, to her bridal bed,
 Like some shy maid in convent bred;
 While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
 Sing forth her nuptial rōundelay.

XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung that roundelay;
 That summer morn shone blithe and gay;
 But morning beam, and wild-bird's call,
 Awak'd not Mortham's silent hall.
 No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,
 Took in the wonted niche his seat;
 To the pav'd court no peasant drew;
 Wak'd to their toil no menial crew;
 The maiden's carol was not heard,
 As to her morning task she far'd:
 In the void offices around,
 Rung not a hoof, nor bay'd a hound;
 Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
 Accus'd the lagging groom's delay;
 Untrimm'd, undress'd, neglected now,
 Was alley'd walk and orchard bough;
 All spoke the master's absent care,
 All spoke neglect and disrepair.

* The situation of Mortham is eminently beautiful, occupying a high bank, at the bottom of which the Greta winds out of the dark, narrow, and romantic dell, which the text has attempted to describe, and flows onward through a more open valley to meet the Tees about a quarter of a mile from the castle.

Scuth of the gate, an arrow flight,
 Two mighty elms their limbs unite,
 As if a canopy, to spread
 O'er the lone dwelling of the dead ;
 For their huge boughs in arches bent
 Above a massive monument,
 Carv'd o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
 With many a scutcheon and device:
 There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,
 Bertram stood pond'ring by the tomb.

XVIII.

"It vanish'd like a fitting ghost !
 Behind this tomb," he said, "'twas lost—
 This tomb, where oft I deem'd lies stor'd
 Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.
 'Tis true, the aged servants said
 Here his lamented wife is laid ;
 But weightier reasons may be guess'd
 For their lord's strict and stern behest,
 That none should on his steps intrude,
 Whene'er he sought this solitude.—
 An ancient mariner I knew,
 What time I sail'd with Morgan's crew,
 Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
 Of Raleigh, Forbisher, and Drake ;
 Advent'rous hearts ! who barter'd, bold,
 Their English steel for Spanish gold.
 Trust not, would his experience say,
 Captain or comrade with your prey ;
 But seek some charnel, when, at full,
 The moon gilds skeleton and skull ;
 There dig, and tomb your precious heap,
 And bid the dead your treasure keep ;*
 Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
 Their service to the task compel.
 Lacks there such charnel ?—kill a slave,
 Or pris'ner, on the treasure grave ;

* If time did not permit the Bucaniers to lavish away their plunder in their usual debancheries, they were wont to hide it, in the desert islands and keys which they frequented. They are said to have had recourse to a horrid ritual, in order to secure an unearthly guardian to their treasures. They killed a Negro or Spaniard, and buried him with the treasure, believing that his spirit would haunt the spot, and terrify away all intruders.

And bid his discontented ghost
 Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
 Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween
 Is in my morning vision seen.”—

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorn'd the legend wild,
 In mingled mirth and pity smil'd,
 Much marv'ling that a breast so bold
 In such fond tale belief should hold ;
 But yet of Bertram sought to know
 The apparition's form and show.—
 The pow'r within the guilty breast,
 Oft vanquish'd, never quite suppress'd,
 That unsubdued and lurking lies
 To take the felon by surprise,
 And force him, as by magic spell,
 In his despite his guilt to tell,—
 That pow'r in Bertram's breast awokc ;
 Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke ;
 “ 'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head !
 His morion, with the plume of red,
 His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham, right
 As when I slew him in the fight.”—
 “ Thou slay him?—thou?”—With conscious start
 He heard, then mann'd his haughty heart—
 “ I slew him?—I !—I had forgot
 Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the plot.
 But it is spoken—nor will I
 Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
 I slew him ; I ! for thankless pride ;—
 'Twas by this hand that Mortham died.”

XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,
 Averse to every active part,
 But most averse to martial broil,
 From danger shrunk, and turn'd from toil ;
 Yet the meek lover of the lyre
 Nurs'd one brave spark of noble fire ;
 Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
 His blood beat high, his hand wax'd strong.

Not his the nerves that could sustain
 Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain ;
 But, when that spark blaz'd forth to flame
 He rose superior to his frame.
 And now it came, that gen'rous mood ;
 And, in full current of his blood,
 On Bertram he laid desp'rate hand,
 Plac'd firm his foot, and drew his brand.
 "Should every fiend, to whom thou'rt sold
 Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
 Arouse there, ho ! take spear and sword !
 Attack the murd'rer of your Lord !"

XXI.

A moment, fix'd as by a spell,
 Stood Bertram—It seem'd miracle,
 That one so feeble, soft, and tame,
 Set grasp on warlike Risingham.
 But when he felt a feeble stroke,
 The fiend within the ruffian woke !
 To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand,
 To dash him headlong on the sand,
 Was but one moment's work,—one more
 Had drench'd the blade in Wilfrid's gore ;
 But, in the instant it arose,
 To end his life, his love, his woes,
 A warlike form, that mark'd the scene,
 Presents his rapier sheath'd between,
 Parries the fast-descending blow,
 And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe ;
 Nor then unscabbarded his brand,
 But, sternly pointing with his hand,
 With monarch's voice forbade the fight,
 And motion'd Bertram from his sight.
 "Go, and repent," he said, "while time
 Is giv'n thee ; add not crime to crime."

XXII.

Mute, and uncertain, and amaz'd
 As on a vision, Bertram gaz'd !
 'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and high
 His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
 His look and accent of command,
 The martial gesture of his hand.

His stately form, spare-built and tall,
 His war-bleach'd locks—'twas Mortham all,
 Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
 A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
 His wav'ring faith receiv'd not quite
 The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
 But more he fear'd it, if it stood
 His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
 What spectre can the charnel send,
 So dreadful as an injur'd friend?
 Then, too, the habit of command,
 Us'd by the leader of the band,
 When Risingham, for many a day,
 Had march'd and fought beneath his sway,
 Tam'd him—and, with reverted face,
 Backwards he bore his sullen pace;
 Oft stopp'd, and oft on Mortham star'd,
 And dark as rated mastiff glar'd;
 But when the tramp of steeds was heard,
 Plung'd in the glen, and disappear'd,
 Nor longer there the Warrior stood,
 Retiring eastward through the wood;
 But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
 "Tell thou to none that Mortham lives."

XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,
 Hinting he knew not what of fear;
 When nearer came the coursers' tread,
 And, with his father at their head,
 Of horsemen arm'd a gallant power
 Rein'd up their steeds before the tower.
 "Whence these pale looks, my son?" he said
 "Where's Bertram?—Why that naked blade?"—
 Wilfrid ambiguously replied,
 (For Mortham's charge his honour tied,
 "Bertram is gone—the villain's word
 Avouch'd him murd'rer of his lord!
 Even now we fought—but, when your tread
 Announced you nigh, the felon fled."
 In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear
 A guilty hope, a guilty fear;

On his pale brow the dew-drop broke,
And his lip quiver'd as he spoke:—

XXIV.

"A murd'rer!—Philip Mortham died
Amid the battle's wildest tide.
Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!
Yet, grant such strange confession true,
Pursuit were vain—let him fly far—
Justice must sleep in civil war."
A gallant Youth rode near his side,
Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried;
That morn, an embassy of weight
He brought to Barnard's castle gate,
And follow'd now in Wycliffe's train,
An answer for his lord to gain.
His steed, whose arch'd and sable neck
An hundred wreaths of foam bedeck,
Chaf'd not against the curb more high
Than he at Oswald's cold reply;
He bit his lip, implor'd his saint,
(His the old faith)—then burst restraint.

XXV.

"Yes! I beheld his bloody fall,
By that base traitor's dastard ball,
Just when I thought to measure sword,
Presumptuous hope! with Mortham's lord.
And shall the murd'rer 'scape, who slew
His leader, gen'rous, brave, and true?
Escape, while on the dew you trace
The marks of his gigantic pace?
No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
False Risingham shall yield or die.—
Ring out the castle 'larum bell!
Arouse the peasants with the knell!
Meantime disperse—ride, gallants, ride!
Beset the wood on ev'ry side.
But if among you one there be,
That honours Mortham's memory,
Let him dismount and follow me!
Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
And foul suspicion dog your name!"

XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND sprung ;
 Instant on earth the harness rung
 Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
 Who waited not their lord's command
 Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,
 His mantle from his shoulders threw,
 His pistols in his belt he plac'd,
 The green-wood gain'd, the footsteps trac'd,
 Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,
 " To cover, hark !"—and in he bounds,
 Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry
 " Suspicion ! yes—pursue him—fly—
 But venture not, in useless strife,
 On ruffian desp'rate of his life,
 Whoever finds him, shoot him dead !
 Five hundred nobles for his head !"

XXVII.

The horsemen gallop'd to make good
 Each path that issued from the wood.
 Loud from the thickets rung the shout
 Of Redmond and his eager route ;
 With them was Wilfrid, stung with ire,
 And envying Redmond's martial fire,
 And emulous of fame.—But where
 Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir ?
 He, bound by honour, law, and faith,
 Avenger of his kinsman's death ?—
 Leaning against the elmin tree,
 With drooping head and slacken'd knee,
 And clenched teeth, and close-clasp'd hands,
 In agony of soul he stands !
 His downcast eye on earth is bent,
 His soul to ev'ry sound is lent ;
 For in each shout that cleaves the air,
 May ring discov'ry and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vail'd it him, that brightly play'd
 The morning sun on Mortham's glade ?
 All seems in giddy round to ride,
 Like objects on a stormy tide,

Seen eddyng by the moonlight dim,
 Imperfectly to sink and swim.
 What 'vail'd it, that the fair domain,
 Its battled mansion, hill and plain,
 On which the sun so brightly shone,
 Envied so long, was now his own?
 The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
 Of Brackenbury's dismal tow'r,
 Had been his choice, could such a doom
 Have open'd Mortham's bloody tomb!
 Forc'd, too, to turn unwilling ear
 To each surmise of hope or fear,
 Murmur'd among the rustics round,
 Who gather'd at the 'larum sound;
 He dar'd not turn his head away,
 E'en to look up to heaven to pray,
 Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
 For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

XXIX.

At length o'erpast that dreadful space,
 Back straggling came the scatter'd chase;
 Jaded and weary, horse and man,
 Return'd the troopers, one by one.
 Wilfrid, the last, arriv'd to say,
 All trace was lost of Bertram's way,
 Though Redmond still, up Brignall wood,
 The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—
 O, fatal doom of human race!
 What tyrant passions passions chase!
 Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,
 Av'rice and pride resume their throne;
 The pang of instant terror by,
 They dictate thus, their slave's reply:

XXX.

“Ay—let him range like hasty hound!
 And if the grim wolf's lair be found,
 Small is my care how goes the game
 With Redmond, or with Risingham.
 Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!
 Thy fair Matilda, all so coy

To thee, is of another mood
 To that bold youth of Erin's blood.
 Thy ditties will she freely praise,
 And pay thy pains with courtly phrase;
 In a rough path will oft command—
 Accept at least—thy friendly hand;
 His she avoids, or, urg'd and pray'd,
 Unwilling takes his proffer'd aid,
 While conscious passion plainly speaks
 In downcast look and blushing cheeks.
 Whene'er he sings, will she glide nigh,
 And all her soul is in her eye;
 Yet doubts she still to tender free
 The wonted words of courtesy.
 These are strong signs!—yet wherefore sigh,
 And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?
 Thine shall she be, if thou attend
 The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

“ Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light
 Brought genuine news of Marston's fight.
 Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,
 And conquest bless'd the rightful side;
 Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,
 Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;
 Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
 Must fine for freedom and estate.
 Of these, committed to my charge,
 Is Rokeby, prisoner at large;
 Redmond, his page, arriv'd to say
 He reaches Barnard's tow'rs to-day.
 Right heavy shall his ransom be,
 Unless that maid compound with thee!
 Go to her now—be bold of cheer
 While her soul floats 'twixt hope and fear:
 It is the very change of tide,
 When best the female heart is tried—
 Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
 Are in the current swept to sea;
 And the bold swain, who plies his oar
 May lightly row his bark to shore.”

CANTO THIRD.

I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth
Respect the brethren of their birth;
Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
Less cruel chase to each assign'd.
The falcon, pois'd on soaring wing,
Watches the wild-duck by the spring;
The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair;
The greyhound presses on the hare;
The eagle pounces on the lamb;
The wolf devours the fleecy dam:
Ev'n tiger fell, and sullen bear,
Their likeness and their lineage spare,
Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
Plying war's desultory trade,
Incursion, flight, and ambuscade,
Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,
Who hears the settlers track his way,
And knows in distant forest far
Camp his red brethren of the war;
He, when each double and disguise
To baffle the pursuit he tries,
Low crouching now his head to hide,
Where swampy streams through rushes glide,
Now cov'ring with the wither'd leaves
The foot-prints that the dew receives;
He, skill'd in ev'ry silvan guile,
Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,
As Risingham, when on the wind
Arose the loud pursuit behind.
In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dar'd,
When Rookan-edge, and Redswair high
To bugle rung and blood-bound's cry,

Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
 And Lid'sdale riders in the rear ;
 And well his vent'rous life had prov'd
 The lessons that his childhood lov'd.*

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
 Each attribute of roving war ;
 The sharpen'd ear, the piercing eye,
 The quick resolve in danger nigh ;
 The speed, that in the flight or chase
 Outstripp'd the Charib's rapid race
 The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
 To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim ;
 The iron frame, inur'd to bear
 Each dire inclemency of air,
 Nor less confirm'd to undergo
 Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throes.
 These arts he prov'd, his life to save
 In peril oft by land and wave,
 On Arawaca's desert shore,
 Or where La Plata's billows roar,
 When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
 Track'd the marauder's steps in vain.
 These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
 Must save him now by Greta's side.

IV.

Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
 He prov'd his courage, art, and speed.
 Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace.
 Now started forth in rapid race,
 Oft doubling back in mazy train,
 To blind the trace the dew's retain ;
 Now clombe the rocks projecting high,
 To baffle the pursuer's eye ;
 Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound
 The echo of his footsteps drown'd.

* Reidswair, famed for a skirmish to which it gives name, is on the very edge of the Carter-Fell, which divides England from Scotland. The Rookan is a place upon Reedwater. Bertram, being described as a native of these dales, where the habits of hostile depredation long survived the union of the crowns, may have been, in some degree, prepared by education for the exercise of a similar trade in the wars of the Bucaniers.

But if the forest verge he nears,
 There trample steeds, and glimmer spears;
 If deeper down the copse he drew,
 He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
 Beating each cover while they came,
 As if to start the silvan game.
 'Twas then—like tiger close beset
 At ev'ry pass with toil and net,
 'Counter'd where'er he turns his glare,
 By clashing arms and torches' flare,
 Who meditates, with furious bound,
 To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,—
 'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
 Prompting to rush upon his foes:
 But as that crouching tiger, cōw'd
 By brandish'd steel and shouting crowd,
 Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
 Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
 And couches in the brake and fern,
 Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
 The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace
 Of the bold youth who led the chase;
 Who paus'd to list for ev'ry sound,
 Climb'd ev'ry height to look around,
 Then rushing on with naked sword,
 Each dingle's bosky depths explor'd.
 'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye;
 'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly
 Disorder'd from his glowing cheek;
 Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak.
 A form more active, light, and strong,
 Ne'er shot the ranks of war along;
 The modest, yet the manly mien,
 Might grace the court of maiden queen;
 A face more fair you well might find,
 For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,
 Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,
 The charm of regularity;
 But ev'ry feature had the pow'r
 To aid th' expression of the hour:

Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
 Danc'd laughing in his light-blue eye;
 Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
 And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire;
 Or soft and sadden'd glances show
 Her ready sympathy with woe;
 Or in that wayward mood of mind,
 When various feelings are combin'd,
 When joy and sorrow mingle near,
 And hope's bright wings are check'd by fear,
 And rising doubts keep transport down,
 And anger lends a short-liv'd frown;
 In that strange mood which maids approve
 Ev'n when they dare not call it love;
 With every change his features play'd,
 As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew:
 And much he marvell'd that the crew,
 Rous'd to revenge bold Mortham dead,
 Were by that Mortham's foeman led;
 For never felt his soul the woe,
 That wails a gen'rous foeman low,
 Far less that sense of justice strong,
 That wrecks a gen'rous foeman's wrong.
 But small his leisure now to pause;
 Redmond is first, whate'er the cause:
 And twice that Redmond came so near
 Where Bertram couch'd like hunted deer,
 The very boughs his steps displace,
 Rustled against the ruffian's face,
 Who, desp'rate, twice prepar'd to start,
 And plunge his dagger in his heart!
 But Redmond turn'd a different way,
 And the bent boughs resum'd their sway,
 And Bertram held it wise, unseen,
 Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
 Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
 When roving hunters beat the brake,
 Watches with red and glist'ning eye,
 Prepar'd, if heedless step draw nigh,

With forked tongue and venom'd fang
 Instant to dart the deadly pang;
 But if the intruders turn aside,
 Away his coils unfolded glide,
 And through the deep savannah wind,
 Some undisturb'd retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
 And heard the loud pursuit renew,
 And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
 Oft mutter'd in his savage mind—
 "Redmond O'Neale! were thou and I
 Alone this day's event to try,
 With not a second here to see,
 But the grey cliff and oaken tree,—
 That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,
 Should ne'er repeat its summons proud!
 No! nor e'er try its melting power
 Again in maiden's summer bower."
 Eluded, now behind him die,
 Faint and more faint, each hostile cry;
 He stands in Scargill wood alone,
 Nor hears he now a harsher tone
 Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive cry,
 Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;
 And on the dale, so lone and wild,
 The summer sun in quiet smil'd.

VIII.

He listen'd long with anxious heart,
 Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
 And, while his stretch'd attention glows,
 Refus'd his weary frame repose.
 'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
 Where purple heath profusely strown
 And throatwort with its azure bell,
 And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
 There, spent with toil, he listless ey'd
 The course of Greta's playful tide;
 Beneath, her banks now eddy'ng dun,
 Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
 As, dancing over rock and stone,
 In yellow light her currents shone,

Matching in hue the fav'rite gem
 Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
 Then, tir'd to watch the current's play,
 He turn'd his weary eyes away,
 To where the bank opposing show'd
 Its huge, square cliffs, through shaggy wood.
 One, prominent above the rest,
 Rear'd to the sun its pale grey breast;
 Around its broken summit grew
 The hazel rude, and sable yew;
 A thousand varied lichens dy'd
 Its waste and weather-beaten side
 And round its rugged basis lay,
 By time or thunder rent away,
 Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
 Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
 Such was the scene's wild majesty,
 That fill'd stern Bertram's gazing eye.

IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclin'd,
 Revolving, in his stormy mind,
 The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
 His patron's blood by treason spilt;
 A crime, it seem'd, so dire and dread,
 That it had pow'r to wake the dead.
 Then, pond'ring on his life betray'd
 By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
 In treach'rous purpose to withhold,
 So seem'd it, Mortham's promis'd gold,
 A deep and full revenge he vow'd
 On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud;
 Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
 Redoubl'd vengeance, swift and dire!—
 If, in such mood, (as legends say,
 And well believ'd that simple day,)
 The Enemy of Man has pow'r
 To profit by the evil hour,
 Here stood a wretch, prepar'd to change
 His soul's redemption for revenge!*

* It is agreed by all writers upon magic and witchcraft, that revenge was the most common motive for the pretended compact between Satan and his vassals.

But though his vows, with such a fire
 Of earnest and intense desire
 For vengeance dark and fell, were made,
 As well might reach hell's lowest shade,
 No deeper clouds the grove embrown'd,
 No nether thunders shook the ground;—
 The demon knew his vassal's heart,
 And spar'd temptation's needless art

— x.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
 Came Mortham's form—Was it a dream?
 Or had he seen, in vision true,
 That very Mortham whom he slew?
 Or had in living flesh appear'd
 The only man on earth he fear'd?—
 To try the mystic cause intent,
 His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
 'Counter'd at once a dazzling glance,
 Like sunbeam flash'd from sword or lance.
 At once he started as for fight,
 But not a foeman was in sight;
 He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,
 He heard the river's sounding course;
 The solitary woodlands lay,
 As slumb'ring in the summer ray.
 He gaz'd, like lion rous'd, around,
 Then sunk again upon the ground.
 'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,
 Glanc'd sudden from the sparkling stream;
 Then plung'd him from his gloomy train
 Of ill-connected thoughts again,
 Until a voice behind him cried,
 "Bertram! well met on Greta side."

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,
 As instant sunk the ready brand;
 Yet, dubious still, oppos'd he stood
 To him that issued from the wood:
 "Guy Denzil!—is it thou?" he said;
 "Do we two meet in Scargill shade!—
 Stand back a space!—thy purpose show
 Whether thou com'st as friend or foe.

x

Report hath said, that Denzil's name
 From Rokeby's band was raz'd with shame."—
 "A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
 Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,
 Of my marauding on the clowns
 Of Calverley and Bradford downs.*
 I reckon not. In a war to strive,
 Where, save the leaders, none can thrive
 Suits ill my mood; and better game
 Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same
 Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,
 Who watch'd with me in midnight dark,
 To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.
 How think'st thou?"—"Speak thy purpose out;
 I love not mystery or doubt."—

XII.

"Then, list.—Not far there lurk a crew
 Of trusty comrades, stanch and true,
 Glean'd from both factions—Roundheads, freed
 From cant of sermon and of creed;
 And Cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,
 Spurn at the bonds of discipline.
 Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,
 A warfare of our own to hold,
 Than breathe our last on battle-down,
 For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
 Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,
 A chief and leader lack we yet.—
 Thou art a wand'rer, it is said;
 For Mortham's death, thy steps way-laid,
 Thy head at price—so say our spies,
 Who range the valley in disguise.
 Join then with us:—though wild debate
 And wrangling rend our infant state,
 Each to an equal loath to bow,
 Will yield to chief renown'd as thou."

* The troops of the King, when they first took the field, were as well disciplined as could be expected from circumstances. But as the circumstances of Charles became less favourable, and his funds for regularly paying his forces decreased, habits of military license prevailed among them in greater excess.

XIII.

"E'en now," thought Bertram, "passion-stirr'd,
 I call'd on hell, and hell has heard!
 What lack I, vengeance to command,
 But of stanch comrades such a band?
 This Denzil, vow'd to ev'ry evil,
 Might read a lesson to the devil.
 Well, be it so! each knave and fool
 Shall serve as my revenge's tool."—
 Aloud, "I take thy proffer, Guy,
 But tell me where thy comrades lie?"—
 "Not far from hence," Guy Denzil said;
 "Descend, and cross the river's bed,
 Where rises yonder cliff so grey."
 "Do thou," said Bertram, "lead the way.
 Then mutter'd, "It is best make sure;
 Guy Denzil's faith was never pure."
 He follow'd down the steep descent,
 Then through the Greta's streams they went;
 And, when they reach'd the farther shore,
 They stood the lonely cliff before.

XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
 The flinty rock a murmur'd din;
 But when Guy pull'd the wilding spray,
 And brambles, from its base away,
 He saw, appearing to the air,
 A little entrance, low and square,
 Like op'ning cell of hermit lone,
 Dark, winding through the living stone.
 Here enter'd Denzil, Bertram here;
 And loud and louder on their ear,
 As from the bowels of the earth,
 Resounded shouts of boist'rous mirth.
 Of old, the cavern strait and rude,
 In slaty rock the peasant hew'd;
 And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's wave.
 E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,
 Where, far within the darksome rift,
 The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
 But war had silenc'd rural trade,
 And the deserted mine was made

The banquet-hall and fortress too,
 Of Denzil and his desp'rate crew.—
 There Guilt his anxious revel kept;
 There, on his sordid pallet, slept
 Guilt-born Excess, the goblet drain'd
 Still in his slumb'ring grasp retain'd;
 Regret was there, his eye still cast
 With vain repining on the past;
 Among the feasters waited near
 Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
 And Blasphemy, to frenzy driv'n,
 With his own crimes reproaching heav'n;
 While Bertram show'd, amid the crew,
 The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark! the loud revel wakes again,
 To greet the leader of the train.
 Behold the group by the pale lamp,
 That struggles with the earthy damp.
 By what strange features Vice has known,
 To single out and mark her own!
 Yet some there are, whose brows retain
 Less deeply stamp'd her brand and stain.
 See yon pale stripling! when a boy,
 A mother's pride, a father's joy!
 Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclin'd,
 An early image fills his mind:
 The cottage, once his sire's, he sees,
 Embower'd upon the banks of Tees;
 He views sweet Winston's woodland scene,
 And shares the dance on Gainford-green.
 A tear is springing—but the zest
 Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,
 Hath to loud laughter stirr'd the rest.
 On him they call, the aptest mate
 For jovial song and merry feat;
 Fast flies his dream—with dauntless air,
 As one victorious o'er Despair,
 He bids the ruddy cup go round,
 Till sense and sorrow both are drown'd;
 And soon, in merry wassail, he,
 The life of all their revelry,

Peals his loud song!—The muse has found
 Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
 'Mid noxious weeds at random strew'd,
 Themselves all profitless and rude.—
 With desp'rate merriment he sung,
 The cavern to the chorus rung;
 Yet mingled with his reckless glee
 Remorse's bitter agony.

XVI.

SONG.

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there,
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily,—

Chorus.

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.”—

“If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tow'r and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we,
 That dwell by dale and down?
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May.”—

Chorus.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.

XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
 And by your palfrey good,
 I read you for a ranger sworn,
 To keep the king's greenwood.”—
 “A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
 And 'tis at peep of light;
 His blast is heard at merry morn,
 And mine at dead of night.”—

Chorus.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are gay;
 I would I were with Edmund there,
 To reign his Queen of May!

“With burnish'd brand and musketoon,
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold Dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum.”—
 “I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.

Chorus.

“And, O! though Brignall banks be fair,
 And Greta woods be gay,
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
 Would reign my Queen of May!

XVIII.

“Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die;
 The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
 Were better mate than I!
 And when I'm with my comrades met,
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now.

Chorus.

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen."

When Edmund ceased his simple song,
 Was silence on the sullen throng,
 Till wak'd some ruder mate their glee
 With note of coarser minstrelsy.
 But, far apart, in dark divan,
 Denzil and Bertram many a plan,
 Of import foul and fierce, design'd,
 While still on Bertram's grasping mind
 The wealth of murder'd Mortham hung;
 Though half he fear'd his daring tongue.
 When it should give his wishes birth,
 Might raise a spectre from the earth!

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told:
 When, scornful, smil'd his comrade bold;
 For, train'd in licence of a court,
 Religion's self was Denzil's sport:
 Then judge in what contempt he held
 The visionary tales of eld!
 His awe for Bertram scarce repress'd
 The unbeliever's sneering jest.
 "Twere hard," he said, "for sage or seer
 To spell the subject of your fear;
 Nor do I boast the art renown'd,
 Vision and omen to expound,
 Yet, faith if I must needs afford
 To spectre watching treasur'd hoard,
 As ban-dog keeps his master's roof,
 Bidding the plund'rer stand aloof,
 This doubt remains—thy goblin gaunt
 Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;
 For why his guard on Mortham hold,
 When Rokeby castle hath the gold
 Thy patron won on Indian soil,
 By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?"—

XX.

At this he paus'd—for angry shame
 Lower'd on the brow of Risingham.
 He blush'd to think, that he should seem
 Assertor of an airy dream,
 And gave his wrath another theme.
 “Denzil,” he says, “though lowly laid,
 Wrong not the meñ'ry of the dead;
 For, while he liv'd, at Mortham's look
 Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!
 And when he tax'd thy breach of word
 To yon fair rose of Allenford,
 I saw thee crouch like chaſten'd hound,
 Whose back the huntsman's lash hath found.
 Nor dare to call his foreign wealth
 The spoil of piracy or stealth;
 He won it bravely with his brand,
 When Spain wag'd warfare with our land.
 Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,
 Nor couple Bertram's name with fear
 Mine is but half the demon's lot,
 For I believe, but tremble not,—
 Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard
 Thou deem'st at Rokeby castle stor'd;
 Or think'st that Mortham would bestow
 His treasure with his faction's foe?”

XXI.

Soon quench'd was Denzil's ill-tim'd mirth;
 Rather he would have seen the earth
 Give to ten thousand spectres birth,
 Than venture to awake to flame
 The deadly wrath of Risingham.
 Submiss he answer'd,—“Mortham's mind,
 Thou know'st, to joy was ill inclin'd.
 In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,
 A lusty reveller was he;
 But since return'd from over sea,
 A sullen and a silent mood
 Hath numb'd the current of his blood.
 Hence he refus'd each kindly call
 To Rokeby's hospitable hall,

And our stout knight, at dawn of morn
 Who lov'd to hear the bugle-horn,
 Nor less, when eve his oaks embrown'd,
 To see the ruddy cup go round,
 Took umbrage that a friend so near
 Refus'd to share his chase and cheer ;
 Thus did the kindred barons jar,
 Ere they divid'd in the war.
 Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
 Of Mertham's wealth is destin'd heir."—

XXII.

"Destin'd to her ! to yon slight maid !
 The prize my life had well nigh paid,
 When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave
 I fought, my patron's wealth to save !—
 Denzil, I knew him long, but ne'er
 Knew him that joyous cavalier,
 Whom youthful friends and early fame
 Call'd soul of gallantry and game.
 A moody man, he sought our crew,
 Desp'rate and dark, whom no one knew ;
 And rose, as men with us must rise,
 By scorning life and all its ties.
 On each adventure rash he rov'd,
 As danger for itself he lov'd ;
 On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
 Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine ;
 Ill was the omen if he smil'd,
 For 'twas in peril stern and wild ;
 But when he laugh'd, each luckless mate
 Might hold our fortune desperate.
 Foremost he fought in ev'ry broil,
 Then scornful turn'd him from the spoil ;
 Nay, often strove to bar the way
 Between his comrades and their prey ;
 Preaching, ev'n then, to such as we,
 Hot with our dear-bought victory,
 Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

"I lov'd him well—His fearless part,
 His gallant leading, won my heart.

And after each victorious fight,
 'Twas I that wrangl'd for his right,
 Redeem'd his portion of the prey
 That greedier mates had torn away :
 In field and storm thrice sav'd his life,
 And once amid our comrades' strife.—
 Yes, I have lov'd thee ! Well hath prov'd
 My toil, my danger, how I lov'd !
 Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,
 Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.
 Rise if thou canst !' he look'd around,
 And sternly stamp'd upon the ground—
 " Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,
 Ev'n as this morn it met mine eye,
 And give me, if thou dar'st, the lie !"
 He paus'd—then, calm and passion-freed,
 Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

XXIV.

" Bertram, to thee I need not tell,
 What thou hast cause to wot so well,
 How Superstition's nets were twin'd
 Around the Lord of Mortham's mind,
 But since he drove thee from his tower,
 A maid he found in Greta's bower,
 Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway,
 To charm his evil fiend away.
 I know not if her features mov'd
 Remembrance of the wife he lov'd ;
 But he would gaze upon her eye,
 Till his mood soften'd to a sigh.
 He, whom no living mortal sought
 To question of his secret thought,
 Now ev'ry thought and care confess'd
 To his fair niece's faithful breast ;
 Nor was there aught of rich and rare,
 In earth, in ocean, or in air,
 But it must deck Matilda's hair.
 Her love still bound him unto life ;
 But then awoke the civil strife,
 And menials bore, by his commands,
 Three coffers, with their iron bands,

From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,
 To her lone bower in Rokeby-Keep,
 Pond'rous with gold and plate of pride—
 His gift, if he in battle died.”—

XXV.

“Then Denzil, as I guess, lays train,
 These iron-banded chests to gain ;
 Else, wherefore should he hover here,
 Where many a peril waits him near,
 For all his feats of war and peace,
 For plunder'd boors, and harts of grease ?
 Since through the hamlets as he far'd,
 What hearth has Guy's marauding spar'd,
 Or where the chase that hath not rung
 With Denzil's bow, at midnight strung ?”—
 “I hold my wont—my rangers go,
 Ev'n now to track a milk-white doe.
 By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,
 In Greta wood she harbours fair,
 And when my huntsman marks her way,
 What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey ?
 Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,
 We rate her ransom at her dower.”—

XXVI.

“'Tis well !—there's vengeance in the thought,
 Matilda is by Wilfrid sought ;
 And hot-brain'd Redmond, too, 'tis said,
 Pays lover's homage to the maid.
 Bertram she scorn'd—If met by chance,
 She turn'd from me her shudd'ring glance,
 Like a nice dame, that will not brook
 On what she hates and loathes to look ;
 She told to Mortham she could ne'er
 Behold me without secret fear,
 Foreboding evil :—She may rue
 To find her prophecy fall true !—
 The war has weeded Rokeby's train,
 Few foll'wers in his halls remain ;
 If thy scheme miss, then, brief and bold,
 We are enow to storm the hold ;

Bear off the plunder, and the dame.
And leave the castle all in flame.”—

XXVII.

“ Still art thou Valour’s vent’rous son !
Yet ponder first the risk to run :
The menials of the castle, true,
And stubborn to their charge, though few ;
The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
The wicket-grate—the inner fosse”——
“ Fool ! if we blench for toys like these,
On what fair guerdon can we seize ?
Our hardiest venture, to explore
Some wretched peasant’s fenceless door,
And the best prize we bear away,
The earnings of his sordid day.”
“ A while thy hasty taunt forbear :
In sight of road more sure and fair,
Thou wouldst not choose, in blindfold wrath,
Or wantonness, a desp’rate path ?
List then ;—for vantage or assault,
From gilded vane to dungeon vault,
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know :
There is one postern, dark and low,
That issues at a secret spot,
By most neglected or forgot.
Now, could a spial of our train
On fair pretext admittance gain,
That sally-port might be unbarr’d :
Then, vain were battlement and ward !”

XXVIII.

“ Now speak’st thou well :—to me the same,
If force or art shall urge the game ;
Indiff’rent, if like fox I wind,
Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
But, hark ! our merry men so gay
Troll forth another roundelay.”—

SONG.

“ A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine !

To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
 And press the rue for wine !
 A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
 A feather of the blue,
 A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
 No more of me you knew,
My love !
 No more of me you knew.

“This morn is merry June, I trow,
 The rose is budding fain ;
 But she shall bloom in winter snow,
 Ere we two meet again.”
 He turn'd his charger as he spake,
 Upon the river shore,
 He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
 Said, “ Adieu for evermore,
My love !
 And adieu for evermore.”—

XXIX.

“ What youth is this, your band among,
 The best for minstrelsy and song ?
 In his wild notes seem aptly met
 A strain of pleasure and regret.”—
 “ Edmond of Winston is his name ;
 The hamlet sounded with the fame
 Of early hopes his childhood gave,—
 Now center'd all in Brignall cave !
 I watch him well—his wayward course
 Shows oft a tincture of remorse.
 Some early love-shaft graz'd his heart,
 And oft the scar will ache and smart.
 Yet is he useful ;—of the rest,
 By fits, the darling and the jest,
 His harp, his story, and his lay,
 Oft aid the idle hours away :
 When unemploy'd, each fiery mate
 Is ripe for mutinous debate.
 He tuned his strings e'en now—again
 He wakes them, with a blither strain.

XXX.

SONG.

ALLEN-A-DALE.

Allen-a-Dale has no fagot for burning,
 Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
 Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
 Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
 Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!
 And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
 And he views his domains upon Arkindale side.
 The mere for his net, and the land for his game,
 The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame;
 Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,
 Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
 Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright;
 Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
 Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
 And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,
 Who at Rere-cross* on Stannore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
 The mother, she ask'd of his household and home:
 "Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
 My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still;
 'Tis the blue vault of heav'n, with its crescent so pale,
 And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;
 They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone:
 But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry:
 He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye,
 And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
 And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale!

XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
 Love mingles ever in his lay.

* This is a fragment of an old cross, with its pediment, surrounded by an intrenchment, upon the very summit of the waste ridge of Stannore, near a small house of entertainment called the Spittal.

But when his boyish wayward fit
 Is o'er, he hath address and wit ;
 O ! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
 Each dialect, each various shape."—
 "Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
 Soft ! who comes here ?"—" My trusty spy.
 Speak, Hamlin ! hast thou lodged our deer ?"—
 " I have—but two fair stags are near.
 I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
 From Eglistone up Thorsgill glade ;
 But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
 And then young Redmond, in his pride,
 Shot down to meet them on their way :
 Much, as it seem'd, was theirs to say :
 There's time to pitch both toil and net,
 Before their path be homeward set."
 A hurried and a whisper'd speech
 Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach ;
 Who, turning to the robber band,
 Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.

 CANTO FOURTH.

I.

WHEN Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
 Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,*
 Till, hov'ring near, her fatal croak
 Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,
 And the broad shadow of her wing
 Blacken'd each cataract and spring,
 Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,
 Thund'ring o'er Caldron and High-Force ;
 Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
 Fix'd on each vale a Runic name,

* About the year of God 866, the Danes, under their celebrated leaders Inguar (more properly Agnar) and Hubba, sons, it is said, of the still more celebrated Regnar Lodbrog, invaded Northumberland, bringing with them the magical standard, so often mentioned in poetry, called REAFEN, or Raunfan, from its bearing the figure of a raven. They renewed and extended their incursions, and began to colonize, establishing a kind of capital at York, from which they spread their conquests and incursions in every direction.

Rear'd high their altars' rugged stone,
 And gave their Gods the land they won.
 Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,
 And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
 And Woden's Croft did tittle gain
 From the stern Father of the Slain;
 But to the Monarch of the Mace,
 That held in fight the foremost place,
 To Odin's son, and Sifia's spouse,
 Near Stratforth high they paid their vows,
 Remember'd Thor's victorious fame,
 And gave the dell the Thund'rer's name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper err'd, I ween,
 Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
 With all its varied light and shade,
 And every little sunny glade,
 And the blithe brook that strolls along
 Its pebbled bed with summer song,
 To the grim God of blood and scar,
 The grisly King of Northern War.
 O, better were its banks assign'd
 To spirits of a gentler kind!
 For where the thicket-groups recede,
 And the rath primrose decks the mead,
 The velvet grass seems carpet meet
 For the light fairies' lively feet.
 Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown
 Might make proud Oberon a throne,
 While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
 Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly;
 And where profuse the wood-vetch clings
 Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
 Its pale and azure-pencill'd flower
 Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade;
 But, skirting ev'ry sunny glade,
 In fair variety of green
 The woodland lends its silvan screen.

Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
 Its boughs by weight of ages broke ;
 And tow'rs erect, in sable spire,
 The pine-tree scath'd by lightning-fire ;
 The drooping ash and birch, between,
 Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,
 And all beneath, at random grow
 Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
 Or, round the stems profusely twin'd,
 Fling summer odours on the wind.
 Such varied group Urbino's hand
 Round Him of Tarsus nobly plann'd,
 What time he bade proud Athens own
 On Mars's Mount the God Unknown !
 Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,
 Though bent by age, in spirit high :
 There rose the scar-seam'd vet'ran's spear,
 There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,
 While Childhood at her foot was plac'd
 Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.

“ And rest we here,” Matilda said,
 And sate her in the varying shade.
 Chance-met, we well may steal an hour,
 To friend-ship due from fortune's power.
 Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
 Thy counsel to thy sister-friend ;
 And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
 No farther urge thy desprate 'quest.
 For to my care a charge is left,
 Dang'rous to one of aid bereft,
 Well nigh an orphan, and alone,
 Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown.”
 Wilfrid, with wonted kindness grac'd,
 Beside her on the turf she plac'd ;
 Then paus'd, with downcast look and eye,
 Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh,
 Her conscious diffidence he saw,
 Drew backward as in modest awe,
 And sat a little space remov'd,
 Unmark'd to gaze on her he lov'd.

V.

Wreath'd in its dark-brown rings, her hair
 Half hid Matilda's forehead fair.
 Half hid and half reveal'd to view
 Her full dark eye of hazel hue.
 The rose, with faint and feeble streak,
 So slightly ting'd the maiden's cheek,
 That you had said her hue was pale;
 But if she fac'd the summer gale,
 Or spoke, or sung, or quicker mov'd,
 Or heard the praise of those she lov'd,
 Or when of int'rest was express'd
 Aught that wak'd feeling in her breast,
 The mantling blood in ready play
 Rivall'd the blush of rising day.
 There was a soft and pensive grace
 A cast of thought upon her face,
 That suited well the forehead high,
 The eyelash dark, and downcast eye;
 The mild expression spoke a mind
 In duty firm, compos'd, resign'd;—
 'Tis that which Roman art has giv'n,
 To mark their maiden Queen of Heav'
 In hours of sport, that mood gave way
 To Fancy's light and frolic play;
 And when the dance, or tale, or song,
 In harmless mirth sped time along,
 Full oft her doting sire would call
 His Maud the merriest of them all.
 But days of war, and civil crime,
 Allow'd but ill such festal time,
 And her soft pensiveness of brow
 Had deepen'd into sadness now.
 In Marston field her father ta'en,
 Her friends dispers'd, brave Mortham slain,
 While ev'ry ill her soul foretold,
 From Oswald's thirst of pow'r and gold,
 And boding thoughts that she must part,
 With a soft vision of her heart,—
 All lower'd around the lovely maid,
 To darken her dejection's shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
 Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
 Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
 In English blood imbrued his steel,
 Against St George's cross blaz'd high
 The banners of his Tanistry,
 To fiery Essex gave the foil,
 And reign'd a prince on Ulster's soil?
 But chief arose his victor pride,
 When that brave Marshal fought and died,*
 And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
 His billows red with Saxon gore.
 'Twas first in that disastrous fight,
 Rokeby and Mortham prov'd their might.
 There had they fall'n among the rest,
 But pity touch'd a chieftain's breast;
 The Tanist be to great O'Neale;†
 He check'd his foll'wers' bloody zeal,
 To quarter took the kinsman bold,
 And bore them to his mountain-hold,
 Gave them each silvan joy to know,
 Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could show,
 Shar'd with them Erin's festal cheer,
 Show'd them the chase of wolf and deer,
 And, when a fitting time was come,
 Safe and unransom'd sent them home,
 Loaded with many a gift, to prove
 A gen'rous foe's respect and love.

* The chief victory which Tyrone obtained over the English was in a battle fought near Blackwater, while he besieged a fort garrisoned by the English, which commanded the passes into his country. He is said to have entertained a personal animosity against the knight-marshal, Sir Henry Bagnal, whom he accused of detaining the letters which he sent to Queen Elizabeth, explanatory of his conduct, and offering terms of submission. The river, called by the English, Blackwater, is termed in Irish, Avon-Duff, which has the same signification.

† When an Irish chief died, it was not the eldest son who succeeded to his authority, but a captain elected for the occasion; after whom the eldest son was generally nominated the Tanist, that is, the successor to the captain. The Tanist, therefore, of O'Neale, was the heir apparent of his power. This kind of succession appears also to have regulated, in very remote times, the succession to the crown of Scotland. It would have been imprudent, if not impossible, to have asserted a minor's right of succession in those stormy days, when the principles of policy were the mere impulses of selfishness and violence.

VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head
 Some touch of early snow was shed;
 Calm he enjoy'd, by Greta's wave,
 The peace which James the Peaceful gave,
 While Mortham, far beyond the main,
 Wag'd his fierce wars on Indian Spain.—
 It chanc'd upon a wintry night,
 That whiten'd Stanmore's stormy height,
 The chase was o'er, the stag was kill'd,
 In Rokeby hall the cups were fill'd,
 And by the huge stone chimney sate
 The Knight in hospitable state.
 Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
 When a loud summons shook the gate,
 And sore for entrance and for aid
 A voice of foreign accent pray'd.
 The porter answer'd to the call,
 And instant rush'd into the hall
 A Man, whose aspect and attire
 Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread*
 Around his bare and matted head;
 On leg and thigh, close stretch'd and trim,
 His vesture show'd the sinewy limb;
 In saffron dyed, a linen vest
 Was frequent folded round his breast;
 A mantle long and loose he wore,
 Shaggy with ice, and stain'd with gore,
 He clasp'd a burden to his heart,
 And, resting on a knotted dart,
 The snow from hair and beard he shook,
 And round him gaz'd with wilder'd look.

* It would seem, that the ancient Irish dress was (the bonnet excepted) very similar to that of the Scottish Highlanders. The want of a covering on the head was supplied by the mode of plaiting and arranging their hair, which was called the *glibbe*. These glibbes, according to Spenser, were fit marks for a thief, since, when he wished to disguise himself, he could either cut it off entirely, or so pull it over his eyes as to render it very hard to recognise him.

Then up the hall, with stagg'ring pace
He hasten'd by the blaze to place,
Half lifeless from the bitter air,
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.
To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
Then stood erect his tale to show,
With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barb'rous throne.*
"Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!
Turlough O'Neale salutes thee dear;
He graces thee, and to thy care
Young Redmond gives, his grandson fair.
He bids thee breed him as thy son,
For Turlough's days of joy are done;
And other lords have seiz'd his land,
And faint and feeble is his hand;
And all the glory of Tyrone
Is like a morning vapour flown.
To bind the duty on thy soul,
He bids thee think on Erin's bowl!
If any wrong the young O'Neale,
He bids thee think of Erin's steel.
To Mortham first this charge was due,
But, in his absence, honours you.—
Now is my master's message by,
And Ferraight will contented die."

IX.

His look grew fix'd, his cheek grew pale,
He sunk when he had told his tale;
For, hid beneath his mantle wide,
A mortal wound was in his side.
Vain was all aid—in terror wild,
And sorrow, scream'd the orphan Child.
Poor Ferraight rais'd his wistful eyes,
And faintly strove to soothe his cries;
All reckless of his dying pain,
He blest, and blest him o'er again!
And kiss'd the little hands outspread.
And kiss'd and cross'd the infant head.

* The Irish chiefs, in their intercourse with the English, and with each other, were wont to assume the language and style of independent royalty.

And, in his native tongue and phrase,
 Pray'd to each saint to watch his days;
 Then all his strength together drew,
 The charge to Rokeby to renew.
 When half was falter'd from his breast,
 And half by dying signs express'd,
 "Bless thee, O'Neale!" he faintly said,
 And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
 Upon the Child to end the tale:
 And then he said, that from his home
 His grandsire had been forc'd to roam,
 Which had not been if Redmond's hand
 Had but had strength to draw the brand,
 The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,
 That hung beside the grey wolf's head.—
 'Twas from his broken phrase descried,
 His foster-father was his guide,*
 Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore
 Letters, and gifts a goodly store;
 But ruffians met them in the wood,
 Ferraight in battle boldly stood,
 Till wounded and o'erpower'd at length,
 And stripp'd of all, his failing strength
 Just bore him here—and then the child
 Renew'd again his moaning wild.

XI.

The tear, down childhood's cheek that flows,
 Is like the dew-drop on the rose;
 When next the summer breeze comes by,
 And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
 Won by their care, the orphan Child
 Soon on his new protector smil'd,
 With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
 Through his thick curls of flaxen hair,
 But blithest laugh'd that cheek and eye,
 When Rokeby's little maid was nigh;

* There was no tie more sacred among the Irish than that which connected the foster-father, as well as the nurse herself, with the child they brought up.

'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
Matilda's tottering steps to guide;
His native lays in Irish tongue,
To soothe her infant ear he sung,
And primrose twin'd with daisy fair,
To form a chaplet for her hair.
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand and hand,
And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;
And years draw on our human span,
From child to boy, from boy to man;
And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen
A gallant boy in hunter's green.
He loves to wake the felon boar,
In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
And loves, against the deer so dun,
To draw the shaft, or lift the gun:
Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,
And down its cluster'd stores to hail,
Where young Matilda holds her veil.
And she, whose veil receives the shower,
Is alter'd too, and knows her power;
Assumes a monitress's pride,
Her Redmond's dang'rous sports to chide;
Yet listens still to hear him tell
How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,
How at his fall the bugle rung,
Till rock and greenwood answer flung;
Then blesses her, that man can find
A pastime of such savage kind!

XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale
So well with praise of wood and dale,
And knew so well each point to trace,
Gives living int'rest to the chase,
And knew so well o'er all to throw
His spirit's wild romantic glow.

That, while she blam'd, and while she fear'd,
 She lov'd each vent'rous tale she heard.
 Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
 To bow'r and hall their steps restrain,
 Together they explor'd the page
 Of glowing bard or gifted sage;
 Oft plac'd the ev'ning fire beside,
 The minstrel art alternate tried,
 While gladsome harp and lively lay
 Bade winter night flit fast away:
 Thus from their childhood blending still
 Their sport, their study, and their skill,
 An union of the soul they prove,
 But must not think that it was love.
 But though they dar'd not, envious Fame
 Soon dar'd to give that union name;
 And when so often, side by side,
 From year to year the pair she ey'd,
 She sometimes blam'd the good oid Knight,
 As dull of ear and dim of sight,
 Sometime his purpose would declare,
 That young O'Neale should wed his heir.

XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
 And bandage from the lovers' eyes;
 'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
 Had Rokeby's favour well nigh won.
 Now must they meet with change of cheer,
 With mutual looks of shame and fear;
 Now must Matilda stray apart,
 To school her disobedient heart:
 And Redmond now alone must rue
 The love he never can subdue.
 But factions rose, and Rokeby sware,
 No rebel's son should wed his heir;
 And Redmond, nurtur'd while a child
 In many a bard's traditions wild,
 Now sought the lonely wood or stream
 To cherish there a happier dream,
 Of maiden won by sword or lance,
 As in the regions of romance;

And count the heroes of his line,
 Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,*
 Shane-Dymas† wild, and Geraldine,‡
 And Connan-more, who vow'd his race
 For ever to the fight and chase,
 And curs'd him, of his lineage born,
 Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn,
 Or leave the mountain and the wold,
 To shroud himself in castled hold.
 From such examples hope he drew,
 And brighten'd as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,
 Redmond had both his cause to aid,
 And all beside of nurture rare
 That might beseem a baron's heir.
 Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
 On Rokeby's Lord bestow'd his life,
 And well did Rokeby's gen'rous Knight
 Young Redmond for the deed requite.
 Nor was his lib'ral care and cost
 Upon the gallant stripling lost:
 Seek the North Riding broad and wide,
 Like Redmond none could steed bestride.
 From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,
 Like Redmond none could wield a brand:
 And then, of humour kind and free,
 And bearing him to each degree
 With frank and fearless courtesy,
 There never youth was form'd to steal
 Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI.

Sir Richard lov'd him as his son;
 And when the days of peace were done,

* Neal Naighvallach, or Of the Nine Hostages, is said to have been monarch of all Ireland, during the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century.

† This Shane-Dymas, or John the Wanton, held the title and power of O'Neale in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, against whom he rebelled repeatedly.

‡ The O'Neals were closely allied with this powerful and war-like family. This Con-More cursed any of his posterity who should learn the English language, sow corn, or build houses, so as to invite the English to settle in their country.

And to the gales of war he gave
 The banner of his sires to wave,
 Redmond, distinguish'd by his care,
 He chose that honour'd flag to bear,
 And nam'd his page, the next degree
 In that old time to chivalry.*
 In five pitch'd fields he well maintain'd
 The honour'd place his worth obtain'd,
 And high was Redmond's youthful name
 Blaz'd in the roll of martial fame.
 Had fortune smil'd on Marston fight,
 The eve had seen him dubb'd a knight;
 Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife,
 Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life,
 But when he saw him pris'ner made,
 He kiss'd and then resign'd his blade,
 And yielded him an easy prey
 To those who led the Knight away;
 Resolv'd Matilda's sire should prove,
 In prison, as in fight, his love.

XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
 'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,
 A watery ray, an instant seen,
 The darkly closing clouds between.
 As Redmond on the turf reclin'd,
 The past and present fill'd his mind:
 "It was not thus," Affection said,
 "I dream'd of my return, dear maid!
 Not thus, when from thy trembling hand,
 I took the banner and the brand,
 When round me as the bugles blew,
 Their blades three hundred warriors drew,
 And, while the standard I unroll'd,
 Clash'd their bright arms, with clamour bold.

* Originally, the order of chivalry embraced three ranks:—1. The Page; 2. The Squire; 3. The Knight.—But, before the reign of Charles I., the custom of serving as a squire had fallen into disuse, though the order of the page was still, to a certain degree, in observance. This state of servitude was so far from inferring any thing degrading, that it was considered as the regular school for acquiring every quality necessary for future distinction.

Where is that banner now?—its pride
 Lies 'whelm'd in Ouse's sullen tide!
 Where now these warriors?—in their gore;
 They cumber Marston's dismal moor;
 And what avails a useless brand,
 Held by a captive's shackled hand,
 That only would his life retain,
 To aid thy sire to bear his chain!"
 Thus Redmond to himself apart;
 Nor lighter was his rival's heart;
 For Wilfrid, while his gen'rous soul
 Disdain'd to profit by control,
 By many a sign could mark too plain,
 Save with such aid, his hopes were vain.—
 But now Matilda's accents stole
 On the dark visions of their soul,
 And bade their mournful musing fly,
 Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

"I need not to my friends recall,
 How Mortham shunn'd my father's hall;
 A man of silence and of woe,
 Yet ever anxious to bestow
 On my poor self whate'er could prove
 A kinsman's confidence and love.
 My feeble aid could sometimes chase
 The clouds of sorrow for a space:
 But oft'ner, fix'd beyond my pow'r,
 I mark'd his deep despondence low'r.
 One dismal cause, by all unguess'd,
 His fearful confidence confess'd;
 And twice it was my hap to see
 Examples of that agony,
 Which for a season can o'erstrain
 And wreck the structure of the brain.
 He had the awful pow'r to know
 Th' approaching mental overthrow.
 And while his mind had courage yet
 To struggle with the dreadful nit,
 The victim writh'd against its throes,
 Like wretch beneath a murd'rer's blows.

This malady, I well could mark,
 Sprung from some direful cause and dark ;
 But still he kept its source conceal'd,
 Till arming for the civil field ;
 Then in my charge he bade me hold
 A treasure huge of gems and gold,
 With this disjointed dismal scroll,
 That tells the secret of his soul.
 In such wild words as oft betray
 A mind by anguish forc'd astray."

XIX.

MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

" Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
 As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
 When it has happ'd some casual phrase
 Wak'd mem'ry of my former days.
 Believe that few can backward cast
 Their thoughts with pleasure on the past ;
 But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
 And blood and rage my manhood stain,
 And my grey hairs must now descend
 To my cold grave without a friend!
 E'en thou, Matilda, wilt disown
 Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known,
 And must I lift the bloody veil,
 That hides my dark and fatal tale!
 I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
 Leave me one little hour in peace!
 Thus haunted, think'st thou I have skill,
 Thine own commission to fulfil?
 Or, while thou point'st with gesture fierce,
 Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,
 How can I paint thee as thou wert,
 So fair in face, so warm in heart!—

XX.

" Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
 Hast a soft sadness on thy brow ;
 But hers was like the sunny glow,
 That laughs on earth and all below!
 We wedded secret—there was need—
 Diff'ring in country and in creed ;

And when to Mortham's tow'r she came,
We mention'd not her race and name,
Until thy sire, who fought afar,
Should turn him home from foreign war,
On whose kind influence we relied
To soothe her father's ire and pride.
Few months we liv'd retir'd, unknown,
To all but one dear friend alone,
One darling friend—I spare his shame,
I will not write the villain's name!
My trespasses I might forget,
And sue in vengeance for the debt
Due by a brother worm to me,
Ungrateful to God's clemency,
That spar'd me penitential time,
Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.

“ A kindly smile to all she lent,
But on her husband's friend 'twas bent
So kind, that from its harmless glee,
The wretch misconstrued villany.
Repuls'd in his presumptuous love,
A 'vengeful snare the traitor wove.
Alone we sat—the flask had flow'd,
My blood with heat unwonted glow'd,
When through the alley'd walk we spied
With hurried step my Edith glide,
Cow'ring beneath the verdant screen,
As one unwilling to be seen.
Words cannot paint the fiendish smile,
That curl'd the traitor's cheek the while
Eiercely I question'd of the cause;
He made a cold and artful pause,
Then pray'd it might not chafe my mood—
'There was a gallant in the wood!—
We had been shooting at the deer;
My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:
That ready weapon of my wrath
I caught, and, hasting up the path,
In the yew grove my wife I found,
A stranger's arms her neck had bound;

I mark'd his heart—the bow I drew—
 I loos'd the shaft—'twas more than true!
 I found my Edith's dying charms
 Lock'd in her murder'd brother's arms!
 He came in secret to inquire
 Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.

“ All fled my rage—the villain first,
 Whose craft my jealousy had nurs'd ;
 He sought in far and foreign clime
 To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
 The manner of the slaughter done
 Was known to few, my guilt to none ;
 Some tale my faithful steward fram'd
 I know not what—of shaft mis-aim'd ;
 And ev'n from those the act who knew,
 He hid the hand from which it flew.
 Untouch'd by human laws I stood,
 But GOD had heard the cry of blood !
 There is a blank upon my mind,
 A fearful vision ill-defin'd,
 Of raving till my flesh was torn,
 Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
 And when I wak'd to woe more mild,
 And question'd of my infant child—
 (Have I not written, that she bare
 A boy, like summer morning fair?)—
 With looks confus'd my menials tell,
 That armed men in Mortham dell
 Beset the nurse's evening way,
 And bore her, with her charge away.
 My faithless friend, and none but he,
 Could profit by this villany ;
 Him then, I sought, with purpose dread
 Of treble vengeance on his head !
 He 'scap'd me—but my bosom's wound
 Some faint relief from wand'ring found ;
 And over distant land and sea,
 I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.

“ 'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
 Among a daring crew and dread,

With whom full oft my hated life,
 I ventur'd in such desp'rate strife,
 That e'en my fierce associates saw
 My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
 Much then I learn'd, and much can show,
 Of human guilt and human woe,
 Yet ne'er have, in my wand'rings, known
 A wretch, whose sorrows match'd my own!—
 It chanc'd, that after battle fray,
 Upon the bloody field we lay;
 The yellow moon her lustre shed
 Upon the wounded and the dead,
 While, sense in toil and wassail drown'd,
 My ruffian comrades slept around,
 There came a voice—its silver tone
 Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
 'Ah, wretch!' it said, 'what mak'st thou here,
 While unaveng'd my bloody bier,
 While unprotected lives mine heir,
 Without a father's name and care?'

XXIV.

"I heard—obey'd—and homeward drew;
 The fiercest of our desp'rate crew
 I brought at time of need to aid
 My purpos'd vengeance, long delay'd.
 But, humble be my thanks to Heav'n,
 That better hopes and thoughts has giv'n,
 And by our Lord's dear pray'r has taught,
 Mercy by mercy must be bought!—
 Let me in misery rejoice—
 I've seen his face—I've heard his voice—
 I claim'd of him my only child—
 As he disown'd the theft, he smil'd!
 That very calm and callous look,
 That fiendish sneer his visage took,
 As when he said, in scornful mood,
 'There is a gallant in the wood!'—
 I did not slay him as he stood—
 All praise be to my Maker giv'n!
 Long suff'rance is one path to heav'n."

XXV.

Thus far the woeful tale was heard,
 When something in the thicket stirr'd.
 Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy,
 (For he it was that lurk'd so nigh,)
 Drew back—he durst not cross his steel
 A moment's space with brave O'Neale,
 For all the treasur'd gold that rests
 In Mortham's iron-banded chests.
 Redmond resum'd his seat—he said,
 Some roe was rustling in the shade.
 Bertram laugh'd grimly, when he saw
 His tim'rous comrade backward draw.
 "A trusty mate art thou, to fear
 A single arm, and aid so near!
 Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
 Give me my carabine—I'll show
 An art that thou wilt gladly know,
 How thou may'st safely quell a foe."

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram drew
 The spreading birch and hazels through,
 Till he had Redmond full in view;
 The gun he levell'd—Mark like this
 Was Bertram never known to miss,
 When fair oppos'd to aim there sate
 An object of his mortal hate.
 That day young Redmond's death had seen,
 But twice Matilda came between
 The carabine and Redmond's breast,
 Just ere the spring his finger press'd.
 A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
 But yet his fell design forbore:
 "It ne'er," he mutter'd, "shall be said,
 That thus I scath'd thee, haughty maid!"
 Then mov'd to seek more open aim,
 When to his side Guy Denzil came:
 "Bertram, forbear!—we are undone
 For ever, if thou fire the gun.
 By all the fiends, an armed force
 Descends the dell, of foot and horse

We perish if they hear a shot—
 Madman! we have a safer plot—
 Nay, friend, be rul'd, and bear thee back!
 Behold, down yonder hollow track,
 The warlike leader of the band
 Comes, with his broadsword in his hand."
 Bertram look'd up; he saw, he knew
 That Denzil's fears had counsell'd true,
 Then curs'd his fortune and withdrew,
 Threaded the woodlands undescried,
 And gain'd the cave on Greta side.

XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,
 Doom'd to captivity or death,
 Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,
 Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
 Heedless and unconcern'd they sate,
 While on the very verge of fate;
 Heedless and unconcern'd remain'd,
 When Heaven the murd'rer's arm restrain'd;
 As ships drift darkling down the tide,
 Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide.
 Uninterrupted thus they heard
 What Mortham's closing tale declar'd.
 He spoke of wealth as of a load,
 By Fortune on a wretch bestow'd,
 In bitter mockery of hate,
 His cureless woes to aggravate;
 But yet he pray'd Matilda's care
 Might save that treasure for his heir—
 His Edith's son—for still he rav'd
 As confident his life was sav'd;
 In frequent vision, he averr'd,
 He saw his face, his voice he heard,
 Then argued calm—had murder been,
 The blood, the corpses, had been seen;
 Some had pretended too, to mark
 On Windermere a stranger bark,
 Whose crew, with jealous care, yet mild,
 Guarded a female and a child.
 While these faint proofs he told and press'd
 Hope seem'd to kindle in his breast;

Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
It warp'd his judgment, and his brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close :—
“ Heav'n witness for me, that I chose
My part in this sad civil fight,
Mov'd by no cause but England's right.
My country's groans have bid me draw
My sword for gospel and for law ;—
These righted, I fling arms aside,
And seek my son through Europe wide.
My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh,
Already casts a grasping eye,
With thee may unsuspected lie.
When of my death Matilda hears,
Let her retain her trust three years ;
If none, from me, the treasure claim,
Perish'd is Mortham's race and name.
Then let it leave her gen'rous hand,
And flow in bounty o'er the land ;
Soften the wounded pris'ner's lot,
Rebuild the peasant's ruin'd cot ;
So spoils, acquir'd by fight afar,
Shall mitigate domestic war.”

XXIX.

The gen'rous youths, who well had known,
Of Mortham's mind the pow'rful tone,
To that high mind, by sorrow swerv'd,
Gave sympathy his woes deserv'd ;
But Wilfrid chief, who saw reveal'd,
Why Mortham wish'd his life conceal'd,
In secret, doubtless, to pursue
The schemes his wilder'd fancy drew.
Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,
That she would share her father's cell,
His partner of captivity,
Where'er his prison house should be ;
Yet griev'd to think that Rokeby-hall,
Dismantled, and forsook by all,
Open to rapine and to stealth,
Had now no safe-guard for the wealth.

Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
 And for such noble use design'd.
 "Was Barnard Castle then her choice,"
 Wilfrid inquir'd with hasty voice,
 "Since there the victor's laws ordain,
 Her father must a space remain?"
 A flutter'd hope his accents shook,
 A flutter'd joy was in his look.
 Matilda hasten'd to reply,
 For anger flash'd in Redmond's eye;—
 "Duty," she said, with gentle grace,
 "Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place;
 Else had I for my sire assign'd
 Prison less galling to his mind,
 Than that his wild-wood haunts which seem,
 And hears the murmur of the Tees,
 Recalling thus, with ev'ry glance,
 What captive's sorrow can enhance;
 But where those woes are highest, there
 Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care."

XXX.

He felt the kindly check she gave,
 And stood abash'd—then answer'd grave:—
 "I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
 Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.
 I have beneath mine own command,
 So wills my sire, a gallant band,
 And well could send some horseman wight,
 To bear the treasure forth by night,
 And so bestow it as you deem
 In these ill days may safest seem."—
 "Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks," she said:
 "O, be it not one day delay'd!
 And, more thy sister-friend to aid,
 Be thou thyself content to hold,
 In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold,
 Safest with thee."—While thus she spoke,
 Arm'd soldiers on their converse broke,
 The same of whose approach afraid,
 The ruffians left their ambuscade.
 Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
 Then look'd around as for a foe.

"What mean'st thou, friend," young Wycliffe said
 "Why thus in arms beset the glade?"
 "That would I gladly learn from you,
 For up my squadron as I drew,
 To exercise our martial game
 Upon the moor of Barninghame,
 A stranger told you were waylaid,
 Surrounded, and to death betray'd.
 He had a leader's voice, I ween,
 A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
 He bade me bring you instant aid;
 I doubted not, and I obey'd."

XXXI.

Wilfrid chang'd colour, and amaz'd,
 Turn'd short, and on the speaker gaz'd;
 While Redmond ev'ry thicket round
 Track'd earnest as a questing hound,
 And Denzil's carabine he found;
 Sure evidence, by which they knew
 The warning was as kind as true.
 Wisest it seem'd, with cautious speed
 To leave the dell. It was agreed,
 That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
 And fitting guard, should home repair;
 At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
 With a strong band, his sister-friend,
 To bear with her from Rokeby's bowers
 To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
 Secret and safe the banded chests,
 In which the wealth of Mortham rests.
 This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
 Each with a griev'd and anxious heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
 The western hills have hid the sun,
 But mountain peak and village spire,
 Retain reflection of his fire.



Old Barmah towers are people's eyes,
As those that gaze from yonder hills
Distant and high, the tower of Barmah
Like steel upon the rivet glows.

Old Barnard's tow'rs are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller-hill ;
Distant and high, the tow'r of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows ;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to dark'ning heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus aged men, full loath and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er,
Till Mem'ry lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker clos'd on Rokeby's glades,
Where sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream ;
Far louder clamour'd Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied,
And fitful wak'd the evening wind,
Fitful in sighs its breath resign'd.
Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtur'd soul
Felt in the scene a soft control,
With lighter footstep press'd the ground
And often paus'd to look around ;
And though his path was to his love,
Could not but linger in the grove,
To drink the thrilling int'rest dear,
Of awful pleasure check'd by fear.
Such inconsistent moods have we,
E'en when our passions strike the key.

III.

Now, through the wood's dark mazes past,
 The op'ning lawn he reach'd at last,
 Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
 The ancient Hall before him lay.
 Those martial terrors long were fled,
 That frown'd of old around its head :
 The battlements, the turrets grey,
 Seem'd half abandon'd to decay ;
 On barbican and keep of stone
 Stern Time the foeman's work had done.
 Where banners the invader brav'd,
 The harebell now and wallflower wav'd :
 In the rude guard-room, where of yore
 Their weary hours the warders wore,
 Now, while the cheerful fagots blaze,
 On the pav'd floor the spindle plays ;
 The flanking guns dismantled lie,
 The moat is ruinous and dry,
 The grim portcullis gone—and all
 The fortress turn'd to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
 Show'd danger's day reviv'd again ;
 The court-yard wall show'd marks of care,
 The fall'n defences to repair,
 Lending such strength as might withstand
 The insult of marauding band.
 The beams once more were taught to bear
 The trembling drawbridge into air,
 And not, till question'd o'er and o'er,
 For Wilfrid oped the jealous door ;
 And when he enter'd, bolt and bar
 Resum'd their place with sullen jar ;
 Then, as he cross'd the vaulted porch,
 The old grey porter rais'd his torch,
 And view'd him o'er, from foot to head,
 Ere to the hall his steps he led.
 That huge old hall, of knightly state,
 Dismantled seem'd and desolate.
 The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
 Which cross'd the lattic'd oriels, shone,

And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seem'd funeral cave.
Pennon and banner wav'd no more
O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshall'd seen,
To glance those silvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigus, borne away,
Accomplish'd Rokeby's brave array,
But all were lost on Marston's day!
Yet here and there the moonbeams fall
Where armour yet adorns the wall,
Cumbrous of size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight!
Like vet'ran relic of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening flame:
Said, all for parting was prepar'd,
And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father's avarice of gold,
He hinted, that lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burden pry,
He judg'd it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,
What time the midnight-watch was set.
Now Redmond came, whose anxious care
Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid's care and kindness pleas'd,
His cold unready hand he seiz'd,
And press'd it, till his kindly strain,
The gentle youth return'd again.
Seem'd as between them this was said,
"A while let jealousy be dead;
And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair."

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
 It was a compact of the mind.
 A gen'rous thought, at once impress'd
 On either rival's gen'rous breast.
 Matilda well the secret took,
 From sudden change of mien and look;
 And—for not small had been her fear
 Of jealous ire and danger near—
 Felt, ev'n in her dejected state,
 A joy beyond the reach of fate.
 They clos'd beside the chimney's blaze,
 And talk'd, and hop'd for happier days,
 And lent their spirits' rising glow
 A while to gild impending woe;
 High privilege of youthful time,
 Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
 The bick'ring fagot sparkl'd bright,
 And gave the scene of love to sight,
 Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
 Play'd on Matilda's neck of snow,
 Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
 And laugh'd in Redmond's azure eye.
 Two lovers by the maiden sate,
 Without a glance of jealous hate;
 The maid her lovers sat between,
 With open brow and equal mien;—
 It is a sight but rarely spied,
 Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
 A knock alarm'd the outer gate,
 And ere the tardy porter stirr'd,
 The tinkling of a harp was heard.
 A manly voice of mellow swell,
 Bore burden to the music well.

SONG.

“ Summer eve is gone and past,
 Summer dew is falling fast;
 I have wander'd all the day,
 Do not bid me farther stray!

Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
Take the wand'ring harper in !'

But the stern porter answer gave,
With "Get thee hence, thou strolling knave !
The king wants soldiers ; war, I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as thou."
At this unkind reproof, again
Answer'd the ready Minstrel's strain.

SONG—*resumed.*

"Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift, or broadsword wield !
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that ring
From the peaceful minstrel-string."—

The porter, all unmov'd, replied,—
Depart in peace, with Heav'n to guide ;
If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so well."

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
The harper's part-young Wilfrid took :
"These notes so wild and ready thrill,
They show no vulgar minstrel's skill ;
Hard were his task to seek a home
More distant, since the night is come ;
And for his faith I dare engage—
Your Harpool's blood is sour'd by age ;
His gate, once readily display'd,
To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
Now e'en to me, though known of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold."—
"O blame not, as poor Harpool's crime,
An evil of this evil time.
He deems dependent on his care,
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the tow'r
To guest unknown at parting hour,

Urging his duty to excess
 Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
 For this poor harper, I would fain
 He may relax:—Hark to his strain!—

IX.

SONG—*resumed.*

“I have song of war for knight,
 Lay of love for lady bright,
 Fairy tale to lull the heir,
 Goblin grim the maids to scare.
 Dark the night, and long till day,
 Do not bid me farther stray!

“Rokeby’s lords of martial fame,
 I can count them name by name;
 Legends of their line there be,
 Known to few, but known to me;
 If you honour Rokeby’s kin,
 Take the wand’ring harper in!

“Rokeby’s lords had fair regard
 For the harp, and for the bard;
 Baron’s race thrrove never well,
 Where the curse of minstrel fell.
 If you love that noble kin,
 Take the weary harper in!”—

“Hark! Harpool parleys—there is hope,”
 Said Redmond, “that the gate will open.”—
 —“For all thy brag and boast, I trow,
 Nought know’st thou of the Felon Sow,”
 Quoth Harpool, “nor how Greta-side
 She roam’d, and Rokeby forest wide;
 Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
 To Richmond’s friars to make a feast.
 Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
 Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
 That well could strike with sword amain,
 And of the valiant son of Spain,
 Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph;
 There were a jest to make us laugh!
 If thou canst tell it in yon shade
 Thou’st won thy supper and thy bed.”

X.

Matilda smil'd; "Cold hope," said she,
 "From Harpeol's love of minstrelsy!
 But, for this harper, may we dare,
 Redmond, to mend his couch and fare?"—
 —"O, ask not me!—At minstrel-string
 My heart from infancy would spring;
 Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
 But it brings Erin's dream again,
 When plac'd by Owen Lysagh's knee,
 (The Filea of O'Neale was he,*
 A blind and bearded man, whose eld
 Was sacred as a prophet's held,
 I've seen a ring of rugged kerne,
 With aspect shaggy, wild and stern,
 Enchanted by the master's lay,
 Linger around the livelong day,
 Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
 To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
 And feel each varied change of soul
 Obedient to the bard's control.—
 Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
 Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more;†
 Nor Owen's harp, beside the blaze,
 Tell maiden's love, or hero's praise!
 The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
 Centre of hospitable mirth;
 All undistinguish'd in the glade,
 My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
 Their vassals wander wide and far,
 Serve foreign lords in distant war,
 And now the stranger's sons enjoy
 The lovely woods of Clandeboy!"
 He spoke, and proudly turn'd aside,
 The starting tear to dry and hide.

* The Filea, or Ollamh Re Dan, was the proper bard, or, as the name literally implies, poet. Each chieftain of distinction had one or more in his service, whose office was usually hereditary.

† Clandeboy is a district of Ulster, formerly possessed by the sept of the O'Neales, and Slieve-Donard, a romantic mountain in the same province. The clan was ruined after Tyrone's great rebellion, and their places of abode laid desolate.

XI.

Matilda's dark and soften'd eye
 Was glist'ning ere O'Neale's was dry.
 Her hand upon his arm she laid,—
 "It is the will of heav'n," she said.
 "And think'st thou, Redmond, I can part
 From this lov'd home with lightsome heart,
 Leaving to wild neglect whate'er
 Ev'n from my infancy was dear?
 For in this calm domestic bound
 Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
 That hearth, my sire was wont to grace,
 Full soon may be a stranger's place;
 This hall, in which a child I play'd,
 Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
 The bramble and the thorn may braid;
 Or, pass'd for aye from me and mine,
 It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
 Yet is this consolation giv'n,
 My Redmond,—'tis the will of heav'n."
 Her word, her action, and her phrase
 Were kindly as in early days;
 For cold reserve had lost its pow'r,
 In sorrow's sympathetic hour.
 Young Redmond dar'd not trust his voice
 But rather had it been his choice
 To share that melancholy hour,
 Than, arm'd with all a chieftain's pow'r,
 In full possession to enjoy
 Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
 Matilda sees, and hastes to speak.—
 "Happy in friendship's ready aid,
 Let all my murmurs here be staid!
 And Rokeby's Maiden will not part
 From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.
 This night at least, for Rokeby's fame,
 The hospitable hearth shall flame,
 And, ere its native heir retire,
 Find for the wand'rer rest and fire,

While this poor harper, by the blaze,
 Recounts the tale of other days,
 Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
 Admit him, and relieve each need.—
 Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
 Thy minstrel skill?—Nay, no reply—
 And look not sad!—I guess thy thought,
 Thy verse with laurels would be bought;
 And poor Matilda, landless now,
 Has not a garland for thy brow.
 True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,
 Nor wander more in Greta shades;
 But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
 Wilt a short prison-walk allow,
 Where summer flow'rs grow wild at will,
 On Marwood-chase and Toller Hill;
 Then holly green and lily gay
 Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay."
 The mournful youth, a space aside,
 To tune Matilda's harp applied;
 And then a low sad descant rung,
 As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

SONG.

THE CYPRESS WREATH.

O, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree!
 Too lively glow the lilies light,
 The varnish'd holly's all too bright,
 The May-flow'r and the eglantine
 May shade a brow less sad than mine;
 But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
 Or weave it of the cypress-tree!

Let dimpl'd Mirth his temples twine
 With tendrils of the laughing vine;
 The manly oak, the pensive yew,
 To patriot and to sage be due;
 The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
 But that Matilda will not give;
 Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
 Her blended roses, bought so dear;
 Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
 With heath and harebell dipp'd in dew;
 On favour'd Erin's crest be seen
 The flow'r she loves of em'rald green—
 But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare
 The ivy meet for minstrel's hair;
 And, while his crown of laurel-leaves
 With bloody hand the victor weaves,
 Let the loud trump his triumph tell;
 But when you hear the passing bell,
 Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
 And twine it of the cypress-tree.

Yes! twine for me the cypress bough;
 But, O Matilda, twine not now!
 Stay till a few brief months are past,
 And I have look'd and lov'd my last!
 When villagers my shroud bestrew
 With panzies, rosemary, and rue,—
 Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
 And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observ'd the starting tear,
 And spoke with kind and blithesome cheer
 "No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
 When mourns the land thy silent lay,
 Shall many a wreath be freely wove
 By hand of friendship and of love.
 I would not wish that rigid Fate
 Had doom'd thee to a captive's state,
 Whose hands are bound by honour's law,
 Who wears a sword he must not draw;
 But were it so, in minstrel pride
 The land together would we ride,
 On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
 Bound for the halls of barons bold,
 Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
 From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's Peak,

Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
 And roam green Erin's lovely land,
 While thou the gentler souls should move,
 With lay of pity and of love,
 And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
 Would sing of war and warriors slain.
 Old England's bards were vanquish'd then,
 And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,
 And, silenc'd on Ieruiian shore,
 M'Curtin's harp should charm no more!"*
 In lively mood he spoke, to wile
 From Wilfrid's woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

"But," said Matilda, "ere thy name,
 Good Redmond, gain its destin'd fame,
 Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
 Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
 Bid all the household, too, attend,
 Each in his rank a humble friend;
 I know their faithful hearts will grieve,
 When their poor Mistress takes her leave;
 So let the horn and beaker flow
 To mitigate their parting woe."
 The harper came;—in youth's first prime
 Himself; in mode of olden time
 His garb was fashion'd, to express
 The ancient English minstrel's dress,
 A seemly gown of Kendal green,
 With gorget clos'd of silver sheen;
 His harp in silken scarf was slung,
 And by his side an anlace hung.
 It seem'd some masquer's quaint array,
 For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a free
 Yet studied air of courtesy.
 Each look and accent, fram'd to please,
 Seem'd to affect a playful ease;

* MacCurtin, hereditary Ollamh of North Munster, and Filea to Donough, Earl of Thomond and President of Munster.

His face was of that doubtful kind,
 That wins the eye, but not the mind;
 Yet harsh it seem'd to deem amiss
 Of brow so young and smooth as this.
 His was the subtle look and sly,
 That, spying all, seems thought to spy;
 Round all the group his glances stole,
 Unmark'd themselves, to mark the whole.
 Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
 Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
 To the suspicious, or the old,
 Subtle and dangerous and bold
 Had seem'd this self-invited guest;
 But young our lovers,—and the rest,
 Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear
 At parting of their Mistress dear,
 Tear-blinded to the Castle-hall,
 Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
 When wak'd the guest his minstrel tone;
 It fled at inspiration's call,
 As erst the demon fled from Saul.
 More noble glance he cast around,
 More free-drawn breath inspir'd the sound,
 His pulse beat bolder and more high,
 In all the pride of minstrelsy!
 Alas! too soon that pride was o'er,
 Sunk with the lay that bade it soar!
 His soul resum'd, with habit's chain,
 Its vices wild and follies vain,
 And gave the talent, with him born,
 To be a common curse and scorn.
 Such was the youth whom Rokeby's Maid,
 With condescending kindness, pray'd
 Here to renew the strain she lov'd,
 At distance heard and well approv'd.

XVIII.

SONG.

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
My childhood scorn'd each childish toy;
Retir'd from all, reserv'd and coy,

To musing prone,
I woo'd my solitary joy,
My harp alone.

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
Despis'd the humble stream and wood,
Where my poor father's cottage stood,
To fame unknown;—

What should my soaring views make good?
My harp alone!

Love came with all his frantic fire,
And wild romance of vain desire:
The baron's daughter heard my lyre,
And prais'd the tone;—

What could presumptuous hope inspire?
My harp alone!

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,
And manhood's pride the vision curst,
And all that had my folly nurs'd
Love's sway to own;

Yet spar'd the spell that lull'd me first,
My harp alone!

Woe came with war, and want with woe;
And it was mine to undergo
Each outrage of the rebel foe:—
Can aught atone

My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?
My harp alone!

Ambition's dreams I've seen depart,
Have rued of penury the smart,
Have felt of love the venom'd dart,
When hope was flown;

Yet rests one solace to my heart,—
My harp alone!

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,
 My faithful Harp, I'll bear thee still,
 And when this life of want and ill
 Is well nigh gone,
 Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
 My Harp alone!

XIX.

"A pleasing lay!" Matilda said;
 But Harpool shook his old grey head,
 And took his baton and his torch,
 To seek his guard-room in the porch.
 Edmund observed—with sudden change,
 Among the strings his fingers range,
 Until they wak'd a bolder glee
 Of military melody;
 Then paus'd amid the martial sound,
 And look'd with well-feign'd fear around;
 "None to this noble house belong,"
 He said, "that would a Minstrel wrong,
 Who-e fate has been, through good and ill,
 To love his Royal Master still;
 And, with your honour'd leave, would fain
 Rejoice you with a loyal strain."
 Then, as assured by sign and look,
 The warlike tone again he took;
 And Harpool stopp'd, and turn'd to hear
 A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

SONG.

THE CAVALIER.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and grey,
 My true love has mounted his steed and away,
 Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down;
 Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
 Crown!

He has doff'd the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear,
 He has placed the steel-cap o'er his long flowing hair,
 From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs
 down,—

Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
 Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broadsword he draws,
 Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
 His watchword is honour, his pay is renown,—
 GOD strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown.

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all
 The round headed rebels of Westminster Hall;
 But tell these bold traitors of London's proud town,
 That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes,
 There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose!
 Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and
 Brown,

With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown!

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!

Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
 Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,
 In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

XXI.

"Alas!" Matilda said, "that strain,
 Good harper, now is heard in vain!
 The time has been, at such a sound,
 When Rokeby's vassals gather'd round,
 An hundred manly hearts would bound;
 But now, the stirring verse we hear,
 Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
 Listless and sad the notes we own,
 The pow'r to answer them is flown.
 Yet not without his meet applause
 Be he that sings the rightful cause,
 Ev'n when the crisis of its fate
 To human eye seems desperate.
 While Rokeby's Heir such pow'r retains,
 Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains:—
 And, lend thy harp; I fain would try,
 If my poor skill can aught supply,
 Ere yet I leave my fathers' hall,
 To mourn the cause in which we fall."

XXII.

The harper, with a downcast look,
 And trembling hand, her bounty took.—

As yet, the conscious pride of art
 Had steel'd him in his treach'rous part :
 A pow'rful spring, of force unguess'd,
 That hath each gentler mood suppress'd,
 And reign'd in many a human breast;
 From his that plans the red campaign,
 To his that wastes the woodland reign.
 The failing wing, the blood-shot eye,—
 The sportsman marks with apathy,
 Each feeling of his victim's ill
 Drown'd in his own successful skill.
 The vet'ran, too, who now no **more**
 Aspires to head the battle's roar,
 Loves still the triumph of his art,
 And traces on the pencill'd chart
 Some stern invader's destin'd way,
 Through blood and ruin to his prey;
 Patriots to death, and towns to flame
 He dooms, to raise another's name,
 And shares the guilt, though not the **fame**.
 What pays him for his span of time
 Spent in premeditated crime?
 What against pity arms his heart?—
 It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
 Were baseless, vague, and undefin'd.
 His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
 On Passion's changeful tide was tost;
 Nor Vice nor Virtue had the pow'r
 Beyond th' impression of the hour;
 And, O! when Passion rules, how rare
 The hours that fall to Virtue's share!
 Yet now she rous'd her—for the pride,
 That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
 Could scarce support him when arose
 The lay that mourn'd Matilda's woes.

SONG.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
 They mingle with the song :

Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
 I must not hear them long.
 From ev'ry lov'd and native haunt
 The native Heir must stray,
 And, like a ghost whom sunbeams daunt,
 Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers rear'd,
 Their scutcheons may descend.
 A line so long belov'd and fear'd
 May soon obscurely end.
 No longer here Matilda's tone
 Shall bid these echoes swell;
 Yet shall they hear her proudly own
 The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paus'd, and then again
 Resum'd the lay in loftier strain.

XXVI.

Let our halls and tow'rs decay,
 Be our name and line forgot,
 Lands and manors pass away,—
 We but share our Monarch's lot.
 If no more our annals show
 Battles won and banners taken,
 Still in death, defeat, and woe,
 Ours be loyalty unshaken!

Constant still in danger's hour,
 Princes own'd our fathers' aid;
 Lands and honours, wealth and pow'r,
 Well their loyalty repaid.
 Perish wealth, and pow'r, and pride!
 Mortal boons by mortals given;
 But let Constancy abide,—
 Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
 A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirr'd,
 In peasant life he might have known
 As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
 But village notes could ne'er supply
 That rich and varied melody;

And ne'er in cottage-maid was seen
 The easy dignity of mien,
 Claiming respect, yet waving state,
 That marks the daughters of the great,
 Yet not, perchance, had these alone
 His scheme of purpos'd guilt o'erthrown.
 But while her energy of mind
 Superior rose to griefs combin'd,
 Lending its kindling to her eye,
 Giving her form new majesty,—
 To Edmund's thought Matilda seem'd
 The very object he had dream'd;
 When, long ere guilt his soul had known,
 In Winston bow'rs he mus'd alone,
 Taxing his fancy to combine
 The face, the air, the voice divine,
 Of princess fair, by cruel fate
 Rest of her honours, pow'r, and state,
 Till to her rightful realm restor'd
 By destin'd hero's conqu'ring sword.

XXVI.

“Such was my vision!” Edmund thought;
 “And have I, then, the ruin wrought
 Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
 In fairest vision form'd her peer?
 Was it my hand that could unclose
 The postern to her ruthless foes?
 Foes, lost to honour, law, and faith,
 Their kindest mercy sudden death!
 Have I done this? I! who have sworn,
 That if the globe such angel bore,
 I would have trac'd its circle broad,
 To kiss the ground on which she trode!—
 And now—O! would that earth would rive,
 And close upon me while alive!—
 Is there no hope? Is all then lost?—
 Bertram's already on his post!
 Ev'n now, beside the Hall's arch'd door,
 I saw his shadow cross the floor!
 He was to wait my signal strain
 A little respite thus we gain:

By what I heard the menials say,
 Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way—
 Alarm precipitates the crime!
 My harp must wear away the time."—
 And then, in accents faint and low,
 He falter'd forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.

BALLAD.

"And whither would you lead me, then?"
 Quoth the Friar of orders grey;
 And the Ruffians twain replied again,
 "By a dying woman to pray."—

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,
 A sight bodes little harm,
 A lady as a lily bright,
 With an infant on her arm."—

"Then do thine office, Friar grey,
 And see thou shrive her free!
 Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,
 Fling all its guilt on thee.

"Let mass be said, and trentals read,
 When thou'rt to convent gone,
 And bid the bell of St Benedict
 Toll out its deepest tone."

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
 Blindfolded as he came—
 Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
 Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an alter'd man,
 The village crones can tell;
 He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray,
 If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell's way,
 He'll beard him in his pride—
 If he meet a Friar of orders grey,
 He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

"Harper! methinks thy magic lays,"
 Matilda said, "can goblins raise!"

Well nigh my fancy can discern,
 Near the dark porch, a visage stern ;
 E'en now, in yonder shadowy nook,
 I see it !—Redmond, Wilfrid, look !—
 A human form distinct and clear—
 God, for thy mercy !—It draws near !”
 She saw too true. Stride after stride,
 The centre of that chamber wide
 Fierce Bertram gain'd ; then made a stand,
 And, proudly waving with his hand,
 Thunder'd—“ Be still, upon your lives !—
 He bleeds who speaks, he dies who strives.”
 Behind their chief, the robber crew
 Forth from the darken'd portal drew,
 In silence—save that echo dread
 Return'd their heavy measur'd tread.
 The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
 Their arms to gleam, their plumes to wave ;
 File after file in order pass,
 Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
 Then, halting at their leader's sign,
 At once they form'd and curv'd their line,
 Hemming within its crescent drear
 Their victims, like a herd of deer.
 Another sign, and to the aim
 Levell'd at once their muskets came,
 As waiting but their chieftain's word,
 To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew
 Yet, ev'n in mortal terror, true,
 Their pale and startled group oppose
 Between Matilda and the foes.
 “ O, haste thee, Wilfrid !” Redmond cried ;
 “ Undo that wicket by thy side !
 Bear hence Matilda—gain the wood—
 The pass may be a while made good—
 Thy band, ere this, must sure be nigh—
 O speak not—dally not—but fly !”
 While yet the crowd their motions hide,
 Through the low wicket door they glide.

Through vaulted passages they wind,
 In Gothic intricacy twin'd;
 Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
 Matilda to the postern-door,
 And safe beneath the forest tree,
 The Lady stands at liberty.
 The moonbeams, the fresh gale's caress,
 Renew'd suspended consciousness;—
 "Where's Redmond?' eagerly she cries:
 Thou answer'st not—he dies! he dies!
 And thou hast left him, all bereft
 Of mortal aid—with murd'ers left!
 I know it well—he would not yield
 His sword to man—his doom is seal'd!
 For my scorn'd life, which thou hast bought
 At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.

Th' unjust reproach, the angry look,
 The heart of Wilfrid could not brook,
 "Lady," he said, "my band so near,
 In safety thou mayst rest thee here.
 For Redmond's death thou shalt not mourn.
 If mine can buy his safe return."
 He turn'd away—his heart throbb'd high,
 The tear was bursting from his eye;
 The sense of her injustice press'd
 Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—
 "Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"
 He heard, but turn'd him not again;
 He reaches now the postern-door,
 Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e'er
 Was gender'd 'twixt suspense and fear,
 She watch'd the line of windows tall,
 Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,
 Distinguish'd by the paly red
 The lamps in dim reflection shed,
 While all beside in wan moonlight
 Each grated casement glimmer'd white.

No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
 It is a deep and midnight still.
 Who look'd upon the scene, had guess'd
 All in the Castle were at rest :
 When sudden on the windows shone
 A light'ning flash, just seen and gone !
 A shot is heard—Again the flame
 Flash'd thick and fast—a volley came ;
 Then echo'd wildly, from within,
 Of shout and scream the mingled din,
 And weapon-clash and madd'ning cry,
 Of those who kill, and those who die !—
 As fill'd the Hall with sulph'rous smoke,
 More red, more dark, the death-flash broke,
 And forms were on the lattice cast,
 That struck or struggled, as they past.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight wind
 Approach so rapidly behind ?
 It is, it is the tramp of steeds,
 Matilda hears the sound, she speeds,
 Seizes upon the leader's rein—
 " O, haste to aid, ere aid be vain !
 Fly to the postern—gain the Hall !"
 From saddle spring the troopers all ;
 Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
 Run wild along the moonlight lea.
 But, ere they burst upon the scene,
 Full stubborn had the conflict been.
 When Bertram mark'd Matilda's flight,
 It gave the signal for the fight ;
 And Rokeby's vet'rans, seam'd with scars
 Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
 Their momentary panic o'er,
 Stood to the arms which then they bore
 (For they were weapon'd, and prepar'd
 Their Mistress on her way to guard.)
 Then cheer'd them to the fight O'Neale,
 Then peal'd the shot, and clash'd the steel ;
 The war-smoke soon with sable breath
 Darken'd the scene of blood and death,

While on the few defenders close
 The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
 And twice driv'n back, yet fierce and fell,
 Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fall'n—but o'er him stood
 Young Redmond, soil'd with smoke and blood,
 Cheering his mates with heart and hand
 Still to make good their desp'rate stand.
 "Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby halls
 Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
 What! faint ye for their savage cry,
 Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
 These rafters have return'd a shout
 As loud at Rokeby's wassail rout,
 As thick a smoke these hearths have given
 At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.*
 Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
 For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
 These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand,
 Bide buffet from a true man's brand."
 Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
 Upon th' advancing foes he sprung.
 Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
 His brandish'd falchion's sheer descent!
 Backward they scatter'd as he came,
 Like wolves before the levin flame,
 When, mid their howling conclave driven,
 Hath glanc'd the thunderbolt of heaven.
 Bertram rush'd on—but Harpool clasp'd,
 His knees, although in death he gasp'd,
 His falling corpse before him flung,
 And round the trammell'd ruffian clung.
 Just then, the soldiers fill'd the dome,
 And, shouting, charg'd the felons home
 So fiercely, that in panic dread,
 They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled,
 Bertram's stern voice they heed no more,
 Though heard above the battle's roar;

* Such an exhortation was, in similar circumstances, actually given to his followers by a Welsh chieftain.

While, trampling down the dying man,
 He strove, with volley'd threat and ban,
 In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
 To rally up the desp'rate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the Hall enfold,
 Than e'er from battle-thunders roll'd !
 So dense, the combatants scarce know
 To aim or to avoid the blow.
 Smoth'ring and blindfold grows the fight—
 But soon shall dawn a dismal light !
 Mid cries, and clashing arms, there came
 The hollow sound of rushing flame ;
 New horrors on the tumult dire
 Arise—the Castle is on fire !
 Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
 Or frantic Bertram's desp'rate hand.
 Matilda saw—for frequent broke
 From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
 Yon tow'r, which late so clear defin'd
 On the fair hemisphere reclin'd,
 That, pencill'd on its azure pure,
 The eye could count each embrasure,
 Now, swath'd within the sweeping cloud,
 Seems giant-spectre in his shroud ;
 Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
 A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
 And, gath'ring to united glare,
 Streams high into the midnight air ;
 A dismal beacon, far and wide,
 That waken'd Greta's slumb'ring side.
 Soon all beneath, through gall'ry long
 And pendant arch, the fire flash'd strong,
 Snatching whatever could maintain,
 Raise, or extend, its furious reign ;
 Startling, with closer cause of dread,
 The females who the conflict fled,
 And now rush'd forth upon the plain,
 Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.

But ceas'd not yet, the Hall within,
 The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,

Till bursting lattices give proof
 The flames have caught the rafter'd roof,
 What! wait they till its beams amain
 Crash on the slayers and the slain?
 Th' alarm is caught—the drawbridge falls,
 The warriors hurry from the walls,
 But, by the conflagration's light,
 Upon the lawn renew the fight.
 Each straggling felon down was hew'd,
 Not one could gain the shelt'ring wood;
 But forth th' affrighted harper sprung,
 And to Matilda's robe he clung.
 Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
 Stopp'd the pursuer's lifted hand,
 Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
 The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram?—Soaring high,
 The gen'ral flame ascends the sky;
 In gather'd group the soldiers gaze
 Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
 When, like infernal demon, sent
 Red from his penal element,
 To plague and to pollute the air,—
 His face all gore, on fire his hair,
 Forth from the central mass of smoke
 The giant form of Bertram broke!
 His brandish'd sword on high he rears,
 Then plung'd among opposing spears;
 Round his left arm his mantle truss'd,
 Receiv'd and foil'd three lances' thrust.
 Nor these his headlong course withstood,
 Like reeds he snapp'd the tough ash-wood.
 In vain his foes around him clung;
 With matchless force aside he flung
 Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
 Tosses the ban-dogs from his way,
 Through forty foes his path he made,
 And safely gain'd the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
 When from the postern Redmond bore

Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
 Had in the fatal Hall been left.
 Deserted there by all his train;
 But Redmond saw, and turn'd again.—
 Beneath an oak he laid him down,
 That in the blaze gleam'd ruddy brown,
 And then his mantle's clasp undid;
 Matilda held his drooping head,
 Till, giv'n to breathe the freer air,
 Returning life repaid their care.
 He gaz'd on them with heavy sigh,—
 "I could have wish'd ev'n thus to die!"
 No more he said—for now with speed
 Each trooper had regain'd his steed;
 The ready palfreys stood array'd,
 For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid;
 Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
 One leads his charger by the rein.
 But oft Matilda look'd behind,
 As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
 Where far the mansion of her sires
 Beacon'd the dale with midnight fires.
 In gloomy arch above them spread,
 The clouded heav'n lower'd bloody red:
 Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
 Appear'd to roll in waves of blood.
 Then, one by one, was heard to fall
 The tow'r, the donjon-keep, the hall.
 Each rushing down with thunder sound,
 A space the conflagration drown'd;
 Till, gath'ring strength, again it rose,
 Announc'd its triumph in its close,
 Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
 Then sunk—and Rokeby was no more!

 CANTO SIXTH.

I.

THE summer sun, whose early pow'r
 Was wont to gild Matilda's how'r,

And rouse her with his matin ray
 Her duteous orisons to pay,
 That morning sun has three times seen
 The flow'rs unfold on Rokeby green,
 But sees no more the slumbers fly
 From fair Matilda's hazel eye ;
 That morning sun has three times broke
 On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
 But, rising from their silvan screen,
 Marks no grey turrets' glance between.
 A shapeless mass lie keep and tow'r,
 That, hissing to the morning show'r,
 Can but with smould'ring vapour pay
 The early smile of summer day.
 The peasant, to his labour bound,
 Pauses to view the blacken'd mound,
 Striving, amid the ruin'd space,
 Each well-remember'd spot to trace.
 That length of frail and fire-scorch'd wall
 Once screen'd the hospitable hall ;
 When yonder broken arch was whole,
 'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole ;
 And where yon tott'ring columns nod,
 The chapel sent the hymn to God.—
 So flits the world's uncertain span !
 Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
 Gives mortal monuments a date
 Beyond the pow'r of Time and Fate.
 The tow'rs must share the builder's doom ;
 Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb :
 But better boon benignant Heav'n
 To Faith and Charity has giv'n,
 And bids the Christian hope sublime
 Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
 Since that which witness'd Rokeby's flame.
 On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake
 The owlet's homilies awake,
 The bittern scream'd from rush and flag,
 The raven slumber'd on his crag,

Forth from his den the otter drew,—
 Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,
 As between reed and sedge he peers,
 With fierce round snout and sharpen'd ears,
 Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,
 Watches the stream or swims the pool;—
 Perch'd on his wonted eyrie high,
 Sleep seal'd the tercelet's wearied eye,
 That all the day had watch'd so well
 The cushat dart across the dell.
 In dubious beam reflected shone
 That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,
 Beside whose base the secret cave
 To rapine late a refuge gave.
 The crag's wild crest of copse and yew
 On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;
 Shadows that met or shunn'd the sight,
 With ev'ry change of fitful light;
 As hope and fear alternate chase
 Our course through life's uncertain race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copsewood green,
 A solitary form was seen
 To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
 Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
 And pauses oft, and cow'rs dismay'd,
 At ev'ry breath that stirs the shade.
 He passes now the ivy bush,—
 The owl has seen him, and is hush;
 He passes now the dodder'd oak,—
 He heard the startled raven croak;
 Lower and lower he descends,
 Rustle the leaves, the brushwood bends;
 The otter hears him tread the shore,
 And dives, and is beheld no more;
 And by the cliff of pale grey stone
 The midnight wand'rer stands alone.
 Methinks, that by the moon we trace
 A well-remember'd form and face!
 That stripling shape, that cheek so pale,
 Combine to tell a rueful tale,

Of pow'rs misus'd, of passion's force,
 Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
 'Tis Edmund's eye, at ev'ry sound
 That flings that guilty glance around;
 'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
 The brushwood that the cavern hides;
 And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
 'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have spark'd bright,
 A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
 Fearful and quick his eye surveys
 Each angle of the gloomy maze.
 Since last he left that stern abode,
 It seem'd as none its floor had trod;
 Untouch'd appear'd the various spoil,
 The purchase of his comrades' toil;
 Masks and disguises grim'd with mud,
 Arms broken and defil'd with blood,
 And all the nameless tools that aid
 Night-felons in their lawless trade,
 Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
 Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
 Still on the sordid board appear
 The relics of the noontide cheer:
 Flagons and empty flasks were there,
 And bench o'erthrown, and shatter'd chair;
 And all around the semblance show'd,
 As when the final revel glow'd,
 When the red sun was setting fast,
 And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
 "To Rokeby treasure-vaults!" they quaff'd,
 And shouted loud and wildly laugh'd,
 Pour'd madd'ning from the rocky door.
 And parted—to return no more!
 They found in Rokeby vaults their doom,—
 A bloody death, a burning tomb!

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
 Doff'd to assume that quaint disguise;

And shudd'ring thought upon his glee,
 When prank'd in garb of minstrelsy.
 "O be the fatal art accurst."
 He cried, "that mov'd my folly first;
 Till, brib'd by bandits' base applause,
 I burst through God's and Nature's laws!
 Three summer days are scanty past
 Since I have trod this cavern last,
 A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err—
 But, O, as yet no murderer!
 Ev'n now I list my comrades' cheer,
 That gen'ral laugh is in mine ear,
 Which rais'd my pulse, and steel'd my heart,
 As I rehears'd my treach'rous part—
 And would that all since then could seem
 The phantom of a fever's dream!
 But fatal Mem'ry notes too well
 The horrors of the dying yell,
 From my despairing mates that broke,
 When flash'd the fire and roll'd the smoke,
 When the avengers shouting came,
 And hemm'd us 'twixt the sword and flame!
 My frantic flight,— the lifted brand,—
 That angel's interposing hand!—
 If, for my life from slaughter freed,
 I yet could pay some grateful meed!
 Perchance this object of my quest
 May aid"—he turn'd, nor spoke the rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
 With paces five he metes the earth,
 Then toil'd with mattock to explore
 The entrails of the cavern floor,
 Nor paus'd till, deep beneath the ground,
 His search a small steel casket found.
 Just as he stoop'd to loose its hasp,
 His shoulder felt a giant grasp.
 He started, and look'd up aghast,
 Then shriek'd!—"Twas Bertram held him fast
 "Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
 That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?

"Fear not!—By heav'n he shakes as much
 As partridge in the falcou's clutch:"—
 He rais'd him, and unloos'd his hold,
 While from the op'ning casket roll'd
 A chain and reliquaire of gold.
 Bertram beheld it with surprise,
 Gaz'd on its fashion and device,
 Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
 Somewhat he smooth'd his rugged mood :
 For still the youth's half-lifted eye
 Quiver'd with terror's agony,
 And sidelong glanc'd, as to explore,
 In meditated flight, the door.
 "Sit," Bertram said, "from danger free :
 Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee.
 Chance brings me hither; hill and plain
 I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
 And tell me now, thou aguish boy,
 What mak'st thou here? what means this toy?
 Denzil and thou, I mark'd, were ta'en;
 What lucky chance unbound your chain?
 I deem'd, long since on Baliol's tow'r,
 Your heads were warp'd with sun and show'r.
 Tell me the whoie—and, mark! nought e'er
 Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear."
 Gath'ring his courage to his aid,
 But trembling still, the youth obey'd.

VII.

"Denzil and I two nights pass'd o'er
 In fetters on the dungeon floor.
 A guest the third sad morrow brought;
 Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought,
 And ey'd my comrade long askance,
 With fix'd and penetrating glance.
 'Guv Denzil art thou call'd?'—'The same.'—
 'At Court who serv'd wild Buckingham;
 Thence banish'd, won a keeper's place,
 So Villers will'd, in Marwood-chase;
 That lost—I need not tell thee why—
 Thou mad'st thy wit thy wants supply,
 Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guess'd
 My pris'ner right?'—'At thy behest.'—

He paus'd a while, and then went on
 With low and confidential tone ;—
 Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
 Close nestl'd in my couch of straw.—
 ' List to me, Guy. Thou know'st the great
 Have frequent need of what they hate ;
 Hence, in their favour oft we see
 Unscrupl'd, useful men like thee.
 Were I dispos'd to bid thee live,
 What pledge of faith hast thou to give ?'

VIII.

" The ready Fiend, who never yet
 Hath fail'd to sharpen Denzil's wit,
 Prompted his lie—' His only child
 Should rest his pledge.'—The Baron smil'd,
 And turn'd to me—' Thou art his son ?'
 I bow'd—our fetters were undone,
 And we were led to hear apart
 A dreadful lesson of his art.
 Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
 Had fair Matilda's favour won ;
 And long since had their union been,
 But for her father's bigot spleen,
 Whose brute and blindfold party-rage
 Would, force per force, her hand engage
 To a base kern of Irish earth,
 Unknown his lineage and his birth,
 Save that a dying ruffian bore
 The infant brat to Rokeby door.
 Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
 Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed ;
 But fair occasion he must find
 For such restraint well-meant and kind,
 The Knight being render'd to his charge
 But as a prisoner at large.

IX.

" He school'd us in a well-forg'd tale,
 Of scheme the Castle walls to scale,
 To which was leagued each Cavalier
 That dwells upon the Tyne and Wear ;
 That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
 Had dealt with us to aid the plot.

Such was the charge, which Denzil's zeal
Of hate to Rokeby and O'Neale
Proffer'd, as witness, to make good,
Ev'n though the forfeit were their blood.
I scrupled, until o'er and o'er
His pris'ners' safety Wycliffe swore ;
And then—alas ; what needs there more ?
I knew I should not live to say
The proffer I refus'd that day ;
Asham'd to live, yet loath to die,
I soil'd me with their infamy !"—
" Poor youth," said Bertram, " wav'ring still
Unfit alike for good or ill !
But what fell next ?"—" Soon as at large
Was scroll'd and sign'd our fatal charge,
There never yet, on tragic stage,
Was seen so well a painted rage
As Oswald's—show'd ! With loud alarm
He call'd his garrison to arm ;
From tow'r to tow'r, from post to post,
He hurried as if all were lost ;
Consign'd to dungeon and to chain
The good old knight and all his train ;
Warn'd each suspected Cavalier,
Within his limits, to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church of Eglistone."—

X.

" Of Eglistone !—Ev'n now I pass'd,"
Said Bertram, " as the night clos'd fast ;
Torches and cressets gleam'd around,
I heard the saw and hammer sound,
And I could mark they toil'd to raise
A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
Which the grim headsman's scene display'd,
Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
Some evil deed will there be done,
Unless Matilda wed his son ;—
She loves him not—'tis shrewdly guess'd
That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
This is a turn of Oswald's skill ;
But I may meet, and foil him still !—"

How can'st thou to thy freedom?"—"There
Lies mystery more dark and rare.
In midst of Wycliffe's well feign'd rage,
A scroll was offer'd by a page,
Who told, a muffled horsemen late
Had left it at the Castle gate.
He broke the seal—his cheek show'd change,
Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
The mimic passion of his eye
Was turn'd to actual agony;
His hand like summer sapling shook,
Terror and guilt were in his look.
Denzil he judg'd, in time of need,
Fit counsellor for evil deed;
And thus apart his counsel broke
While with a ghastly smile he spoke:—

XI.

"As in the pageants of the stage,
The dead awake in this wild age,
Mortham—whom all men deem'd decreed
In his own deadly snare to bleed,
Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
He train'd to aid in murd'ring me,—
Mortham has 'scaped! The coward shot
The steed, but harm'd the rider not."
Here, with an execration fell,
Bertram leap'd up, and pac'd the cell:—
"Thine own grey head, or bosom dark,"
He mutter'd, "may be surer mark!"
Then sat, and sign'd to Edmund, pale
With terror, to resume his tale.
"Wycliffe went on:—'Mark with what flights
Of wilder'd reverie he writes:—

THE LETTER.

"Ruler of Mortham's destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
Once had he all that binds to life
A lovely child, a lovelier wife;
Wealth, fame, and friendship, were his own—
Thou gav'st the word, and they are flown.

Mark how he pays thee :—To thy hand
 He yields his honours and his land.
 One boon premis'd ;—Restore his child !
 And, from his native land exil'd,
 Mortham no more returns to claim
 His lands, his honours, or his name ;
 Refuse him this, and from the slain
 Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.'—

XII.

“ This billet while the baron read,
 His falt'ring accents show'd his dread ;
 He press'd his forehead with his palm,
 Then took a scornful tone and calm ;
 ‘ Wild as the winds, as billows wild !
 What wot I of his spouse or child ?
 Hither he brought a joyous dame,
 Unknown her lineage or her name ;
 Her, in some frantic fit, he slew ;
 The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
 Heav'n be my witness ! wist I where
 To find this youth, my kinsman's heir,—
 Unguerdon'd, I would give with joy
 The father's arms to fold his boy,
 And Mortham's lands and tow'rs resign
 To the just heirs of Mortham's line.'—
 Thou know'st that scarcely e'en his fear
 Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer ;—
 ‘ Then happy is thy vassal's part,'
 He said, ‘ to ease his patron's heart !
 In thine own jailer's watchful care
 Lies Mortham's just and rightful heir ;
 Thy gen'rous wish is fully won,—
 Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's son.'—

XIII.

“ Up starting with a frenzied look,
 His clenched hand the Baron shook :
 ‘ Is Hell at work ? or dost thou rave,
 Or dar'st thou palter with me, slave !
 Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's towers
 Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.’

Denzil, who well his safety knew,
 Firmly rejoin'd ' I tell thee true.
 Thy racks could give thee but to know
 The proofs, which I, untortured show.
 It chanc'd upon a winter night,
 When early snow made Stanmore white,
 That very night, when first of all,
 Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeby-hall,
 It was my goodly lot to gain
 A reliquary and a chain,
 Twisted and chas'd of massive gold.
 —Demand not how the prize I hold!
 It was not giv'n, nor lent, nor sold.—
 Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
 With letters in the Irish tongue.
 I hid my spoil, for there was need
 That I should leave the land with speed;
 Nor then I deem'd it safe to bear
 On mine own person gems so rare.
 Small heed I of the tablets took,
 But since have spell'd them by the book,
 When some sojourn in Erin's land
 Of their wild speech had given command.
 But darkling was the sense; the phrase
 And language those of other days,
 Involv'd of purpose, as to foil
 An interloper's prying toil.
 The words, but not the sense, I knew,
 Till fortune gave the guiding clew.

XIV.

“ ‘ Three days since was that clue reveal'd
 In Thorsgill as I lay conceal'd,
 And heard at full when Rokeby's Maid
 Her uncle's history display'd;
 And now I can interpret well
 Each syllable the tablets tell.
 Mark, then: Fair Edith was the joy
 Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;
 But from her sire and country fled,
 In secret Mortham's lord to wed.
 O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
 Despatch'd his son to Greta's shore,

Enjoining he should make him known
 (Until his farther will were shown)
 To Edith, but to her alone.
 What of their ill-starr'd meeting fell,
 Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.

“ O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
 Robb'd Mortham of his infant heir;
 He bred him in their nurture wild,
 And call'd him murder'd Connal's child.
 Soon died the nurse; the Clan believ'd
 What from their Chieftain they receiv'd.
 His purpose was, that ne'er again
 The boy should cross the Irish main;
 But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
 The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
 Then on the land wild troubles came,
 And stronger Chieftains urged a claim,
 And wrested from the old man's hands
 His native tow'rs, his father's lands.
 Unable then, amid the strife,
 To guard young Redmond's rights or life,
 Late and reluctant he restores
 The infant to his native shores,
 With goodly gifts and letters stor'd,
 With many a deep conjuring word,
 To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
 Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
 Who was the guide, of Redmond's birth;
 But deem'd his Chief's commands were laid
 On both, by both to be obey'd.
 How he was wounded by the way
 I need not, and I list not say.—

XVI.

“ A wond'rous tale! and, grant it true,
 What, Wycliffe answer'd, 'might I do?
 Heav'n knows, as willingly as now
 I raise the bonnet from my brow,
 Would I my kinsman's manors fair,
 Restore to Mortham or his heir;

But Mortham is distraught—O'Neale
 Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
 Malignant to our rightful cause,
 And train'd in Rome's delusive laws.
 Hark thee apart!—They whisper'd long,
 Till Denzil's voice grew bold and strong:—
 'My proofs! I never will,' he said,
 'Show mortal man where they are laid,
 Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
 By giving me to feed the crows;
 For I have mates at large, who know
 Where I am wont such toys to stow.
 Free me from peril and from band,
 These tablets are at thy command;
 Nor were it hard to form some train,
 To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
 Then, lunatic's nor papist's hand
 Should wrest from thine the goodly land.'—
 —'I like thy wit,' said Wycliffe, 'well;
 But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
 Thy son, unless my purpose err,
 May prove the trustier messenger.
 A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
 From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
 Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
 And freedom, his commission o'er;
 But if his faith should chance to fail,
 The gibbet frees thee from the jail.'

XVII.

"Mesh'd in the net himself had twin'd,
 What subterfuge could Denzil find?
 He told me, with reluctant sigh,
 That hidden here the tokens lie;
 Conjur'd my swift return and aid,
 By all he scoff'd and disobey'd,
 And look'd as if the noose were tied,
 And I the priest who left his side.
 This scroll for Mortham Wycliffe gave,
 Whom I must seek by Greta's wave:
 Or in the hut where chief he hides,
 Where Thorsgill's forester resides,

(Thence chanc'd it, wand'ring in the glade,
That he descried our ambuscade).
I was dismiss'd as evening fell,
And reach'd but now this rocky cell."—
"Give Oswald's letter."—Bertram read,
And tore it fiercely, shred by shred :—
"All lies and villany! to blind
His noble kinsman's generous mind,
And train him on from day to day,
Till he can take his life away.—
And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
I'll tear the secret from thy heart!"—

XVIII.

"It needs not. I renounce," he said,
My tutor and his deadly trade.
Fix'd was my purpose to declare
To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
To tell him in what risk he stands,
And yield these tokens to his hands.
Fix'd was my purpose to atone,
Far as I may, the evil done;
And fix'd it rests—if I survive
This night, and leave this cave alive."—
"And Denzil?"—"Let them ply the rack,
Ev'n till his joints and sinews crack!
If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
And damn'd to this unhallow'd way?
He school'd me, faith and vows were vain:
Now let my master reap his gain."—
"True," answer'd Bertram, "'tis his meed
There's retribution in the deed.
But thou—thou art not for our course,
Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse;
And he, with us the gale who braves,
Must heave such cargo to the waves,
Or lag with overloaded prore,
While barks unburden'd reach the shore."

XIX.

He paus'd, and, stretching him at length,
 Seem'd to repose his bulky strength.
 Communing with his secret mind,
 As half he sat, and half reclin'd,
 One ample hand his forehead press'd,
 And one was dropp'd across his breast.
 The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
 Above his eyes of swarthy flame;
 His lip of pride a while forbore
 The haughty curve till then it wore;
 Th' unalter'd fierceness of his look
 A shade of darken'd sadness took,—
 For dark and sad a presage press'd
 Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
 And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
 So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
 His voice was steady, low, and deep,
 Like distant waves when breezes sleep;
 And sorrow mix'd with Edmund's fear,
 Its low unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

"Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
 The woe that warp'd my patron's mind,
 'T would wake the fountains of the eye
 In other men, but mine are dry.
 Mortham must never see the fool,
 That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool;
 Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
 Than to avenge suppos'd disdain.
 Say, Bertram rues his fault;—a word,
 Till now, from Bertram never heard:
 Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he prays
 To think but on their former days;
 On Quariana's beach and rock,
 On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
 On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
 And on the dart Tlatzeca threw;—
 Perchance my patron yet may hear
 More that may grace his comrade's bier.
 My soul hath felt a secret weight,
 A warning of approaching fate:

A priest had said, 'Return, repent !'
 As well to bid that rock be rent.
 Firm as that flint I face mine end ;
 My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XXI.

"The dawning of my youth, with awe
 And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw ;
 For over Redesdale it came,
 As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
 Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
 When, challenging the Clans of Tyne
 To bring their best my brand to prove,
 O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove ;*
 But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
 Held champion meet to take it down.
 My noontide, India may declare ;
 Like her fierce sun, I fir'd the air !
 Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
 Her natives, from mine angry eye.
 Panama's maids shall long look pale
 When Risingham inspires the tale ;
 Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
 The froward child with Bertram's name.
 And now, my race of terror run,
 Mine be the eve of tropic sun !
 No pale gradations quench his ray,
 No twilight dews his wrath allay ;
 With disk like battle-target red,
 He rushes to his burning bed,

* This custom among the Redesdale and Tynedale Borderers is thus mentioned in the interesting *Life of Bernard Gilpin*. "One Sunday morning, coming to a church in those parts, before the people were assembled, he observed a glove hanging up, and was informed, by the sexton, that it was meant as a challenge to any one who should take it down. Mr. Gilpin ordered the sexton to reach it him; but upon his utterly refusing to touch it, he took it down himself, and put it into his breast. When the people were assembled, he went into the pulpit, and, before he concluded his sermon, took occasion to rebuke them severely for these inhuman challenges. 'I hear,' said he, 'that one among you hath hanged up a glove, even in this sacred place, threatening to fight any one who taketh it down: see, I have taken it down,' and, pulling out the glove, he held it up to the congregation, and then showed them how un-actable such savage practices were to the profession of Christianity, using such persuasive to mutual love as he thought would most affect them."—*Life of Bernard Gilpin*. Lond. 1753, 8vo. p. 177.

Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.—

XXII.

“Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
And lead his force to Redmond’s aid.
Say, till he reaches Eglistone,
A friend will watch to guard his son.
Now, fare-thee-well; for night draws on,
And I would rest me here alone.”
Despite his ill-dissembl’d fear,
There swam in Edmund’s eye a tear;
A tribute to the courage high,
Which stoop’d not in extremity,
But strove, irregularly great,
To triumph o’er approaching fate!
Bertram beheld the dew-drop start,
It almost touch’d his iron heart:—
“I did not think there lived,” he said,
“One, who would tear for Bertram shed.”
He loosen’d then his baldric’s hold,
A buckle broad of massive gold;—
“Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
But this with Risingham remains;
And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,
And wear it long for Bertram’s sake,
Once more—to Mortham speed amain;
Farewell! and turn thee not again.”

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
And far the hours of prime are worn.
Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
Had curs’d his messenger’s delay,
Impatient question’d now his train,
“Was Denzil’s son return’d again?”
It chanc’d there answer’d of the crew,
A menial, who young Edmund knew:
“No son of Denzil this,”—he said;
A peasant boy from Winston glade,

For song and minstrelsy renown'd,
 And knavish pranks, the hamlets round."—
 "Not Denzil's son!—From Winston vale!—
 Then it was false, that specious tale;
 Or, worse—he hath despatch'd the youth
 To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
 Fool that I was!—but 'tis too late;—
 This is the very turn of fate!—
 The tale, or true or false, relies
 On Denzil's evidence!—He dies!—
 Ho! Provost Marshal! instantly
 Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree!
 Allow him not a parting word;
 Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
 Then let his gory head appal
 Marauders from the Castle-wall.
 Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
 With best despatch to Eglistone—
 Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
 Attend me at the castle-gate."—

XXIV.

"Alas!" the old domestic said,
 And shook his venerable head,
 "Alas, my Lord! full ill to-day
 May my young master brook the way!
 The leech has spoke with grave alarm,
 Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
 Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
 That mars and lets his healing art."—
 "Tush, teil not me!—Romantic boys
 Pine themselves sick for airy toys,
 I will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
 Bid him for Eglistone be boune,
 And quick! I hear the dull death-drum
 Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come."
 He paus'd with scornful smile, and then
 Resum'd his train of thought agen.
 "Now comes my fortune's crisis near!
 Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
 Nought else, can bend Matilda's pride,
 Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.

But when she sees the scaffold plac'd,
 With axe and block and headsman grac'd,
 And when she deems, that to deny
 Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
 She must give way.—Then, were the line
 Of Rokeby once combin'd with mine,
 I gain the weather-gage of fate!
 If Mortham come, he comes too late,
 While I, thus allied and prepar'd,
 Bid him defiance to his beard.—
 —If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
 To drop the axe?—Soft! pause we there.
 Mortham still lives—yon youth may tell
 His tale—and Fairfax loves him well;—
 Else, wherefore should I now delay
 To sweep this Redmond from my way?
 But she to piety perforce
 Must yield.—Without there! Sound to horse.”

XXV.

'Twas bustle in the court below,—
 “Mount, and march forward!”—Forth they go;
 Steeds neigh and trample all around,
 Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound.—
 Just then was sung his parting hymn;
 And Denzil turn'd his eyeballs dim,
 And, scarcely conscious what he sees,
 Follows the horsemen down the Tees;
 And scarcely conscious what he hears,
 The trumpets tingle in his ears.
 O'er the long bridge they're sweeping now
 The van is hid by greenwood bough;
 But ere the rearward had pass'd o'er,
 Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
 One stroke, upon the Castle bell,
 To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.

O, for that pencil, erst profuse
 Of chivalry's emblazon'd hues,
 That trac'd of old, in Woodstock bower,
 The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,

And bodied forth the tourney high,
 Held for the hand of Emily!
 Then might I paint the tumult broad,
 That to the crowded abbey flow'd,
 And pour'd, as with an ocean's sound,
 Into the church's ample bound!
 Then might I show each varying mien,
 Exulting, woeful, or serene;
 Indiff'rence, with his idiot stare,
 And Sympathy, with anxious air,
 Paint the dejected Cavalier,
 Doubtful, disarm'd, and sad of cheer;
 And his proud foe, whose formal eye
 Claim'd conquest now and mastery;
 And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
 Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
 And loudest shouts when lowest lie
 Exalted worth and station high.
 Yet what may such a wish avail?
 'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
 Hurrying, as best I can, along,
 The hearers and the hasty song;—
 Like trav'ler when approaching home,
 Who sees the shades of evening come,
 And must not now his course delay,
 Or choose the fair, but winding way;
 Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
 Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
 To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
 Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The rev'rend pile lay wild and waste,
 Profan'd, dishonour'd, and defac'd.
 Through storied lattices no more
 In soften'd light the sunbeams pour,
 Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
 Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
 The Civil fury of the time
 Made sport of sacrilegious crime;
 For dark Fanaticism rent
 Altar, and screen, and ornament,

And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
 Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.
 And now was seen, unwonted sight,
 In holy walls a scaffold dight!
 Where once the priest, of grace divine
 Dealt to his flock the mystic sign;
 There stood the block display'd, and there
 The headsman grim his hatchet bare;
 And for the word of Hope and Faith,
 Resounded loud a doom of death.
 Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
 And echo'd thrice the herald's word,
 Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
 And treason to the Commons' cause,
 The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
 To stoop their heads to block and steel.
 The trumpets flourish'd high and shrill,
 Then was a silence dead and still;
 And silent pray'rs to heav'n were cast,
 And stifling sobs were bursting fast,
 Till from the crowd began to rise
 Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
 And from the distant isles there came
 Deep-mutter'd threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his hand,
 Pow'rful in evil, wav'd his hand,
 And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
 On peril of the murm'rer's head,
 Then first his glance sought Rokeby's Knight;
 Who gaz'd on the tremendous sight,
 As calm as if he came a guest
 To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
 As calm as if that trumpet-call
 Were summons to the banner'd hall;
 Firm in his loyalty he stood,
 And prompt to seal it with his blood.
 With downcast look drew Oswald nigh,—
 He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye!—
 And said, with low and falt'ring breath,
 "Thou know'st the terms of life and death."

The Knight then turn'd, and sternly smil'd;
 "The maiden is mine only child,
 Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
 If with a traitor's son she wed."
 Then Redmond spoke: "The life of one
 Might thy malignity atone,
 On me be flung a double guilt!
 Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt!"
 Wycliffe had listen'd to his suit,
 But dread prevail'd, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
 In secret on Matilda's ear;
 "An union form'd with me and mine,
 Ensures the faith of Rokeby's line.
 Consent, and all this dread array,
 Like morning dream shall pass away!
 Refuse, and, by my duty press'd,
 I give the word—thou know'st the rest."
 Matilda, still and motionless,
 With terror heard the dread address,
 Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
 To hopeless love a sacrifice;
 Then wrung her hands in agony,
 And round her cast bewilder'd eye.
 Now on the scaffold glanc'd, and now
 On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
 She veil'd her face, and, with a voice
 Scarce audible,—“I make my choice!
 Spare but their lives!—for aught beside,
 Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
 He once was gen'rous!”—As she spoke,
 Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke:—
 “Wilfrid, where loiter'd ye so late?
 Why upon Basil rest thy weight?—
 Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand?—
 Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand;
 Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
 Should tears and trembling speak thy joy?”—
 “O hush, my sire! To pray'r and tear
 Of mine thou hast refus'd thine ear;

But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier tone."

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand ;—" Dear maid,
Couldst thou so injure me," he said,
" Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend with him this barb'rous scheme :
Alas ! my efforts made in vain,
Might well have sav'd this added pain.
But now, bear witness, earth and heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this—to call Matilda wife !
I bid it now for ever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart."
His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and with woe,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneel'd—his lip her hand had press'd,—
Just then he felt the stern arrest.
Lower and lower sunk his head,—
They raised him,—but the life was fled !
Then, first alarm'd, his sire and train
Tried ev'ry aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the meed,
To blameless life by Heav'n decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past,
All turn'd and centred on his son,
On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
" And I am childless now," he said :
" Childless, through that relentless maid !
A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
Are bursting on their artist's head !—
Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and there
Comes hated Mortham for his heir,

Eager to knit in happy band
 With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand,
 And shall their triumph soar o'er all
 The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
 No!—deeds, which prudence might not dare,
 Appal not vengeance and despair.
 The murd'ress weeps upon his bier—
 I'll change to real that feigned tear!
 They all shall share destruction's shock;—
 Ho! lead the captives to the block!"—
 But ill his Provost could divine
 His feelings, and forbore the sign.
 "Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
 Shall face the judgment-seat this day!"

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
 Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground;
 Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
 The very deaths-men paus'd to hear.
 'Tis in the churchyard now—the tread
 Hath wak'd the dwelling of the dead!
 Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
 Return the tramp in varied tone.
 All eyes upon the gateway hung,
 When through the Gothic arch there sprung
 A horseman arm'd, at headlong speed—
 Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
 Fire from the flinty floor was spurn'd,
 The vaults unwonted clang return'd!—
 One instant's glance around he threw
 From saddlebow his pistol drew.
 Grimly determin'd was his look!
 His charger with the spurs he strook—
 All scatter'd backward as he came,
 For all knew Bertram Risingham!
 Three bounds that noble courser gave;
 The first has reach'd the central nave,
 The second clear'd the chancel wide,
 The third—he was at Wycliffe's side,
 Full levell'd at the Baron's head,
 Rung the report—the bullet sped—

And to his long account, and last,
 Without a groan dark Oswald past!
 All was so quick, that it might seem
 A flash of light'ning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
 Bertram his ready charger wheels;
 But flounder'd on the pavement-floor
 The steed, and down the rider bore,
 And, bursting in the headlong sway,
 The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
 'Twas while he toil'd him to be freed,
 And with the rein to raise the steed,
 That from amazement's iron trance
 All Wycliffe's soldiers wak'd at once.
 Sword, halberd, musket-but, their blows
 Hail'd upon Bertram as he rose;
 A score of pikes, with each a wound,
 Bore down and pinn'd him to the ground;
 But still his struggling force he rears,
 'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears;
 Thrice from assailants shook him free,
 Once gain'd his feet, and twice his knee,
 By tenfold odds oppress'd at length,
 Despite his struggles and his strength,
 He took a hundred mortal wounds,
 As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds;
 And when he died, his parting groan
 Had more of laughter than of moan!
 —They gaz'd, as when a lion dies,
 And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
 But bend their weapons on the slain,
 Lest the grim king should rouse again!
 Then blow and insult some renew'd,
 And from the trunk, the head had hew'd,
 But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
 A mantle o'er the corse he laid:—
 "Fell as he was in act and mind,
 He left no bolder heart behind:
 Then give him, for a soldier meet,
 A soldier's cloak for windingsheet."

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum,
Arm'd with such pow'rs as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And back'd with such a band of horse,
As might less ample pow'rs enforce;
Possess'd of ev'ry proof and sign
That gave an heir to Mortham's line,
And yielded to a father's arms
An image of his Edith's charms,—
Mortham is come, to hear and see
Of this strange morn the history.
What saw he?—not the church's floor,
Cumber'd with dead and stain'd with gore,
What heard he? not the clam'rous crowd,
That shout their gratulations loud:
Redmond he saw and heard alone,
Clasp'd him, and sobb'd, “My son, my son”—

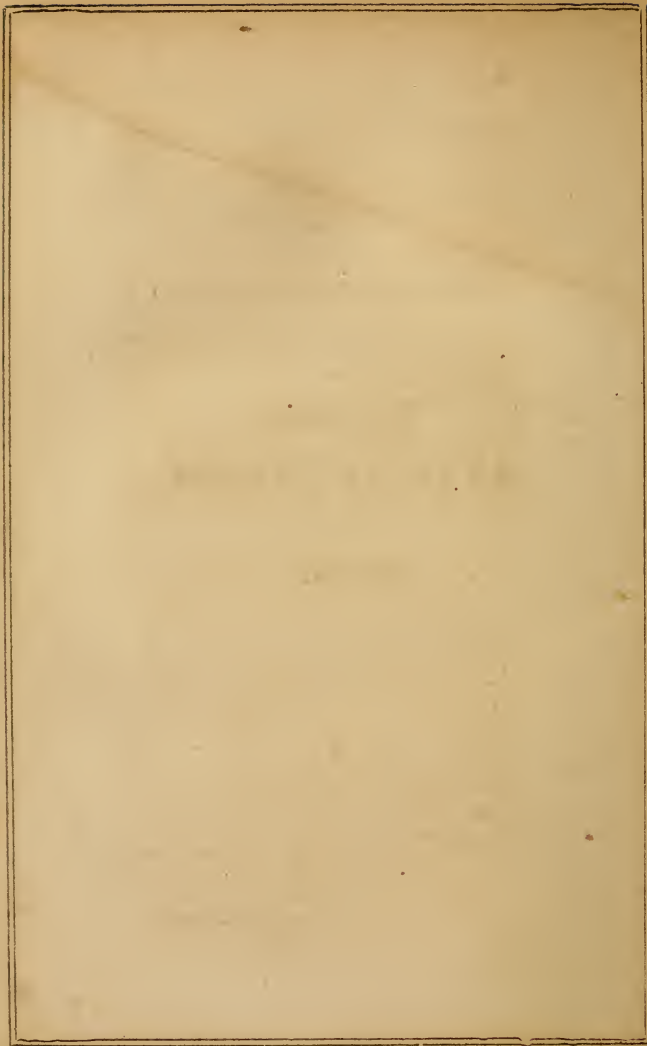
XXXV.

This chanc'd upon a summer morn,
When yeliow wav'd the heavy corn:
But when brown August o'er the land
Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
A gladsome sight the silvan road
From Eglistone to Mortham show'd
A while the hardy rustic leaves
The task to bind and pile the sheaves,
And maids their sickles fling aside,
To gaze on bridegroom and on bride,
And childhood's wond'ring group draws near,
And from the gleaner's hand the ear
Drops, while she folds them for a pray'r
And blessing on the lovely pair.
'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
Her plighted troth to Redmond brave;

And Teesdale can remember yet
How Fate to Virtue paid her debt.
And, for their troubles, bade them prove
A lengthen'd life of peace and love.

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day.
Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!

BALLADS,
LYRICAL PIECES,
AND
SONGS.



GLENFINLAS,

OR

LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.

[The tradition, upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus: While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy* (a hut, built for the purpose of hunting,) and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish, that they had pretty lasses, to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful, young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the syren, who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trumpet, or Jew's harp, some strain, consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend; who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend, into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called, *The Glen of the Green Women.*]

"For them the viewless forms of air obey,
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
They know what spirit blows the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness, stare,
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare."

"O HONE a rie'! O hone a rie'!"
The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!

O, sprung from great Macgillanore,
The chief that never fear'd a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

* *O hone a rie'* signifies—"Alas for the prince, or chief"

But o'er his hills, on festal day,
 How blaz'd Lord Ronald's Beltane tree;
 While youths and maids the light strathspey
 So nimbly danc'd, with Highland glee.

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
 E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
 But now the loud lament we swell,
 O, ne'er to see Lord Ronald more!

From distant isles a chieftain came,
 The joys of Ronald's hall to find,
 And chase with him the dark brown game
 That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom, in Columba's isle,
 The seer's prophetic spirit found,
 As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
 He wak'd his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
 Which wand'ring spirits shrink to hear;
 And many a lay of potent tone,
 Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
 High converse with the dead they hold,
 And oft espy the fated shroud,
 That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
 To rouse the red deer from their den,
 The chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
 And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait, their sports to aid,
 To watch their safety, deck their board:
 Their simple dress, the Highland plaid
 Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
 Their whistling shafts successful flew;
 And still, when dewy evening fell,
 The quarry to their hut they drew.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
 The solitary cabin stood,

Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank, and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silv'ry flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quiv'ring on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their sylvan fare the chiefs enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

—"What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath, and melting eye?"

"To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

"Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh:
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

"But thou may'st teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

"Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

"Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?"

—“ Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
 No more on me shall rapture rise,
 Responsive to the panting breath,
 Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

“ E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
 Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
 I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
 On me the seer's sad spirit came.

“ The last dread curse of angry heav'n,
 With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
 To dash each glimpse of joy, was giv'n—
 The gift, the future ill to know.

“ The bark thou saw'st, yon summer morn,
 So gaily part from Oban's bay,
 My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
 Far on the rocky Colonsay.

“ Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
 Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's pow'r,
 As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe,
 He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

“ Thou only saw'st their tartans* wave,
 As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
 Heard'st but the pibroch, answer'ing brave
 To many a target clanking round.

“ I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
 I saw the wound his bosom bore,
 When on the serried Saxon spears
 He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

“ And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
 And bidst my heart awake to glee,
 And court, like thee, the wanton kiss,—
 That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

“ I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
 I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
 The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now—!
 No more is giv'n to gifted eye!”

* *Tartans*—The full Highland dress, made of the chequered stuff so termed.

—“ Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
 Sad prophet of the evil hour!
 Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
 Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

“ Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
 Clangillian's chieftain ne'er shall fear;
 His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
 Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

“ E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
 My Mary's buskins brush the dew.”—
 He spoke, nor bade the chief farewell,
 But call'd his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound;
 In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
 They howl'd in melancholy sound,
 Then closely couch beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
 And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
 As, bending o'er the dying flame,
 He fed the watch-fire's quiv'ring gleama.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
 And sudden cease their moaning howl;
 Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
 By shiv'ring limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
 As softly, slowly, oped the door;
 And shook responsive ev'ry string,
 As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And, by the watch-fire's glimm'ring light,
 Close by the Minstrel's side was seen
 An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
 All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem;
 Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
 As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
 She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush she softly said,
 O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,

In deep Glenfinlas' moon-light glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

"With her a chief in Highland pride
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?"

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray
Dare ye thus roam Glentinas' side?"

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle
Our father's tow'rs o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

"To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wand'ring here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

"O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
Whom, loit'ring in the woods, I lost;
Alone I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight pray'r,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep."

"O first, for pity's gentle sake,
Guide a lone wand'rer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father's tow'rs ere day."

"First, three times tell each Ave bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy reed:
So shall we safely wind our way."

"O shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

“Not so, by high Dunlathmon’s fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptur’d lyre,
To wanton Morna’s melting eye.”

Wild star’d the Minstrel’s eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

“And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign’d,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail’d ye on the midnight wind!

“Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle’s pretended line
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood,
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He mutter’d thrice St Oran’s rhyme,
And thrice St Fillan’s pow’ful prayer;
Then turn’d him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o’er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung
As many a magic change they find.

‘Till wax’d the Spirit’s alt’ring form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell, away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy’s loose hair
Was wav’d by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o’er the Minstrel’s head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceas’d the more than mortal yell;

And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
 Upon the hissing firebrands fell.
 Next, dropp'd from high a mangled arm;
 The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade:
 And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
 Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.
 Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
 Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore;
 That arm the broad claymore could wield,
 Which dy'd the Teith with Saxon gore.
 Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
 Woe to Glentinas' dreary glen!
 There never son of Albin's hills
 Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!
 E'en the tir'd pilgrim's burning feet
 At noon shall shun that shelt'ring den,
 Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
 The wayward Ladies of the Glen.
 And we—behind the chieftain's shield,
 No more shall we in safety dwell;
 None leads the people to the field—
 And we the loud lament must swell.
 O hone a rie'! O hone a rie'!
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
 And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more

 THE

EVE OF SAINT JOHN.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
 He spurr'd his courser on,
 Without stop or stay, down the rocky way
 That leads to Brotherstone.
 He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
 His banner broad to rear;

He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack* was brac'd, and his helmet
was lac'd,

And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore ;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour ;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
Ran red with English blood ;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierc'd and tore ;
His axe and his dagger with blood embru'd,
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held **him** close and still ;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page ;
Come hither to my knee ;
Thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true !
Since I from Smaylho'me tow'r have been,
What did thy lady do ?"

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold ;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill ;

* The plate-jack is coat armour; the vaunt-brace, or wain-brace, armour for the body; the sperthe, a battle-axe.

Yet the craggy pathway sho did cross,
To the eiry beacon hill.

“ I watch’d her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone ;
No watchman stood by the dreary flame ;
It burned all alone.

“ The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary’s might ! an armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

“ And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there ;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

“ The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain blast was still,
As again I watch’d the secret pair,
On the lonesome beacon hill.

“ And I heard her name in the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve ;
And say, ‘ Come this night to thy lady’s bower ;
Ask no bold Baron’s leave.

“ ‘ He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch ;
His lady is all alone ;
The door she’ll undo to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St John.’

“ ‘ I cannot come ; I must not come ;
I dare not come to thee ;
On the eve of Saint John I must wander alone :
In thy bower I may not be.’

“ ‘ Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight !
Thou should’s’t not say me nay ;
For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer’s day.

“ ‘ And I’ll chain the blood-hound, and the warden
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strew’d on the stair ;

So, by the black rood-stone,* and by holy St John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there!

“Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush
beneath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the
east,
And my foot-step he would know.”

“O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east!
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.”

“He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd;
Then he laugh'd right scornfully—
He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that
knight,
May as well say mass for me.

“At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits
have pow'r,
In thy chamber will I be.”—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see.”—

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high;

“Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast
seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die!”

“His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red
light:
His plume it was scarlet and blue;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew.”

“Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me!
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon-tree.”†

* The black-rood of Melrose was a crucifix of black marble, and of superior sanctity.

† Eildon-tree is said to be the spot where Thomas the Rhymer uttered his prophecies.

“ Yet hear but my word, my noble lord !
 For I heard her name his name ;
 And that lady bright, she called the knight,
 Sir Richard of Coldinghame.”

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow,
 From high blood-red to pale—
 “ The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is
 stiff and stark—
 So I may not trust thy tale.

“ Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
 And Eildon slopes to the plain,
 Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
 That gay gallant was slain.

“ The varying light deceived thy sight,
 And the wild winds drowned the name ;
 For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks
 do sing,
 For Sir Richard of Coldinghame !”

He pass'd the court-gate, and he op'd the tow'r
 grate,
 And he mounted the narrow stair
 To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on
 her wait,
 He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood ;
 Look'd over hill and dale ;
 Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
 And all down Teviotdale.

“ Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright !”
 “ Now hail, thou Baron true !
 What news, what news, from Ancram fight ?
 What news from the bold Buccleuch ?”

“ The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
 For many a southern fell ;
 And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore
 To watch our beacons well.”

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said ;
 Nor added the Baron a word :

Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd
and turn'd,

And oft to himself he said—

“The worms around him creep, and his bloody
grave is deep”

It cannot give up the dead !”

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was well nigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame ;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame !

“Alas ! away, away !” she cried,

“For the holy Virgin's sake !”

“Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side ;
But, lady, he will not awake.

“By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain ;
The mass and the death-pray'r are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

“By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain I fell ;
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

“At our trysting-place,* for a certain space
I must wander to and fro ;
But I had not had pow'r to come to thy bow'r,
Had'st thou not conjur'd me so.”

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd ;

“How, Richard, hast thou sped ?

And art thou sav'd, or art thou lost ?”
The Vision shook his head !

“Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life
So bid thy lord believe :

* *Trysting-place*—Place of rendezvous.

That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand:
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorched like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A cov'ring on her wrist.

There is a Nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun:
There is a Monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That Nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
That Monk, who speaks to none—
That Nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That Monk the bold Baron.

CADYOW CASTLE.

ADDRESSED TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY ANNE HAMILTON

[In detailing the death of the regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting.

"Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the regent's favourites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved, at last, to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow,

through which he was to pass, in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery, which had a window toward the street; spread a leather-bed on the floor, to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the regent's approach, who had lodged during the night, in a house not far distant. Some in distinct information of the danger, which threatened him, had been conveyed to the regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman, who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house, whence the bow had come: but they found the door strongly barricaded, and before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The regent died the same night of his wound.—*History of Scotland*, book v.]

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
 Ennobl'd Cadyow's Gothic tow'rs,
 The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
 And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
 So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
 And echo'd light the dancer's bound,
 As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's tow'rs, in ruins laid,
 And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
 Thrill to the music of the shade,
 Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
 You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
 And tune my harp, of Border frame,
 On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
 From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
 To draw oblivion's pall aside,
 And mark the long forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
 Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
 Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
 The past returns—the present:

Where with the rock's wood-cover'd side
 Were blended late the ruins green,
 Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
 And feudal banners flaunt between :

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
 Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
 The ashler buttress braves its force,
 And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
 Obscurely dance on Evan's stream,
 And on the wave the warder's fire
 Is chequering the moon-light beam.

Fades slow their light ; the east is grey ;
 The weary warder leaves his tower ;
 Steeds snort ; uncoupl'd stag-hounds bay,
 And merry hunters quit the bow'r.

The draw-bridge falls—they hurry out—
 Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
 As, dashing o'er, the jovial route
 Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on :
 His shouting merry-men throng behind ;
 The steed of princely Hamilton
 Was fleetier than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roe-bucks bound,
 The startling red-deer scuds the plain ;
 For, the hoarse bugle's warrior sound
 Has rous'd their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
 Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
 What sullen roar comes down the gale,
 And drowns the hunter's pealing horn ?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chace,
 That roam in woody Caledon,
 Crashing the forest in his race,
 The Mountain Bull comes thund'ring on.

Fierce, on the hunters' quiver'd band,
 He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,

Spurns, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—

Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!**

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man,
That bore the name of Hamilton.

“Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?”

Stern Claud replied, with dark'ning face,
(Grey Pasley's haughty lord was he)

“At merry feast, or buxom chace,
No more the warrior shalt thou see.

“Few suns have set, since Woodhouselee
Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee,
The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

“There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Marg'ret, beautiful and mild,
Sate in her bow'r, a pallid rose,
And peaceful nurs'd her new-born child.

“O change accurs'd! past are those days:
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
Ascends destruction's volum'd flame.

“What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows,
Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
Oh, is it she, the pallid rose?”

* *Pryse*—The note blown at the death of the game.

"The wilder'd trav'ler sees her glide,
 And hears her feeble voice with awe—
 'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride!
 And woe for injur'd Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceas'd—and cries of rage and grief
 Burst mingling from the kindred band,
 And half arose the kindling Chief,
 And half unsheath'd his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream, and rock,
 Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
 Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
 Drives to the leap his jaded steed;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eye-balls glare,
 As one, some vision'd sight that saw,
 Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair:—
 —'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh!

From gory selle,* and reeling steed,
 Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound,
 And, reeking from the recent deed,
 He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—" 'Tis sweet to hear,
 In good green-wood, the bugle blown;
 But sweeter to Revenge's ear,
 To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
 At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
 But prouder base-born Murray rode
 Through old Linlithgow's crowded town

"From the wild Border's humbled side,
 In haughty triumph, marched he,
 While Knox relax'd his bigot pride,
 And smil'd, the trait'rous pomp to see.

"But, can stern Pow'r, with all his vaunt,
 Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
 The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
 Or change the purpose of Despair?"

* *Selle*—Saddle. A word used by Spencer and other authors.

- " With hackbut bent,* my secret stand
 Dark as the purpos'd deed, I chose,
 And mark'd, where, mingling in his band,
 Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.
- " Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
 Murder's foul minion, led the van ;
 And clash'd their broad-swords in the rear,
 The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.
- " Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
 Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
 And haggard Liudesay's iron eye,
 That saw fair Mary weep in vain.
- " Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove,
 Proud Murray's plumage floated high ;
 Scarce could his trampling charger move,
 So close the minious crowded nigh.
- " From the rais'd visor's shade, his eye,
 Dark-rolling, glanc'd the ranks along,
 And his steel truncheon, wav'd on high,
 Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.
- " But yet his sadden'd brow confess'd
 A passing shade of doubt and awe :
 Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
 ' Beware of injur'd Bothwellhaugh !'
- " The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
 Wild rises tumult's startling roar !—
 And Murray's piunny helmet rings—
 —Rings on the ground, to rise no more.
- " What joy the raptur'd youth can feel,
 To hear her love the lov'd one tell,
 Or he, who broaches on his steel
 The wolf, by whom his infant fell !
- " But dearer to my injur'd eye,
 To see in dust proud Murray roll ;
 And mine was ten times trebled joy
 To hear him groan his felon soul.
- " My Marg'ret's spectre glided near ;
 With pride her bleeding victim saw ;

* Hackbut bent.—Gun-cooked.

And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear,
 'Remember injur'd Bothwellhaugh !'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault !
 Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree !
 Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow !—
 Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free."

Vaults ev'ry warrior to his steed ;
 Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
 "Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed !
 Couch, Arran ! couch thy spear of flame !"

But, see ! the Minstrel vision fails—
 The glimm'ring spears are seen no more ;
 The shouts of war die on the gales,
 Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
 The blackbird whistles down the vale,
 And sunk in ivied ruins lie
 The banner'd tow'rs of Evandale.

For chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
 And Vengeance, shouting o'er the slain,
 Lo ! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
 Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
 The maids, who list the Minstrel's tale ;
 Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
 On the fair banks of Evandale.

THE GREY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

[The tradition, upon which this fragment is founded, regards a house, upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Laswade, in Mid Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton-Grange, was formerly named Burndale, from the following tragicadventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman, named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the abbot of Newbottle, a richly endowed abbey, upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned, also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the

contrivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house, of Gilmer-ton-Grange, or Burudale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.

The scene, with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II., and his successor, James. "About the same time he (Peden) came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, 'There are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto;' he halted a little again saying, 'This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!' Then there was a woman went out, ill looked upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, that John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family-worship, and giving some notes upon the scripture, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the *hailan* (partition of the cottage;) immediately he halted, and said, 'There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!' The person went out, and he *insisted* (went out), yet he saw him neither come in nor go out."—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway, part ii. sec. 26.*]

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
 All on saint Peter's day,
 With the pow'r to him giv'n, by the saints in heav'n,
 To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
 And the people kneel'd around;
 And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
 As he kiss'd the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
 Was still, both limb and tongue,
 While through vaulted roof, and aisles aloof,
 The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quiver'd for fear,
 And falter'd in the sound—
 And, when he would the chalice rear,
 He dropp'd it on the ground.

"The breath of one, of evil deed,
Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

"A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorr'd,
Recoils each holy thing.

"Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise.
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!"

Amid them all a Pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth gray:
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween, he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seem'd none more bent to pray,
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose, and went his way.

Again unto his native land,
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat,
Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Through woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

And Lords to meet the Pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more fam'd than he.

And boldly for his country still,
In battle he had stood,

Aye, e'en when, on the banks of Till,
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

Sweet are the paths, O, passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The Pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruined Grange.

A woeful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire;
For, nodding to the fall was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scath'd with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams
Had streak'd the grey with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbottle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Lady's evening song:

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the Pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
 Nor ever rais'd his eye,
 Until he came to that dreary place,
 Which did all in ruins lie.

He gaz'd on the walls, so scath'd with fire,
 With many a bitter groan—
 And there was aware of a Grey Friar,
 Resting him on a stone.

"Now, Christ thee save!" said the Grey Brother
 "Some pilgrim thou seem'st to be;"
 But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
 Nor answer again made he.

"O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
 Or bring reliques from over the sea,
 Or come ye from the shrine of Saint James the divine,
 Or Saint John of Beverley?"

"I come not from the shrine of Saint James the divine,
 Nor bring reliques from over the sea;
 I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
 Which for ever will cling to me."

"Now, woeful Pilgrim, say not so!
 But kneel thee down by me,
 And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
 That absolved thou may'st be."

"And who art thou, thou Grey Brother,
 That I should shrive to thee,
 When he, to whom are giv'n the keys of earth and
 heav'n,
 Has no pow'r to pardon me?"

"O I am sent from a distant clime,
 Five thousand miles away,
 And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
 Done *here* 'twixt night and day."

The Pilgrim kneel'd him on the sand,
 And thus began his saye—
 When on his neck an ice-cold hand
 Did that Grey Brother laye.

* * * * *

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

[Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Erceldoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymor*. It is agreed, on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birth place, of this ancient bard, was Erceldoune, a village situate upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymor's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont; and that the appellation of *The Rhymor* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon this subject.

We are better able to ascertain the period, at which Thomas of Erceldoune lived; being the latter end of the thirteenth century. It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Erceldoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet, and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge, which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen, by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intinate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends, in the tower of Erceldoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return.

The following ballad, is given from a copy, obtained from a lady, residing not far from Erceldoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs Brown's MSS. To this old tale the author has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymor; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind, to the Land of Faerie.]

PART FIRST.

ANCIENT.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
 A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
 And there he saw a ladye bright,
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.
 Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;

At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,—
"All hail, thou mighty queen of heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see"

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said;
"That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along with me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird* shall never danton me."
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Through weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desart wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee
Abide, and rest a little space,
And I will shew you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers P—
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

* *That weird, &c.*—That destiny shall never frighten me.

“ And see not ye that braid, braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?—
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

“ And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?—
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see
For, if you speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae starn
light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude, that's shed on earth,
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—

“ Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”

“ My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said;
“ A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst, where I may be.

“ I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”

“ Now hold thy peace !” the ladye said,
“ For, as I say, so must it be.”

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And, till seven years were gane and past
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.

ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES.

[Corspatrick (Comes Patrick), earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Erceuldoune is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of king Alexander's death, the author has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication of the Rhymer's predictions printed at Edinburgh A.D. 1615.]

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream ;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong ;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be :
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of fausion free.

Says—“ Well met, well met, true Thomas !
Some uncouth ferlies shew to me.”

Says—“ Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave !
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me !

“ Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
And I will shew thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

“ A storm shall roar, this very hour,
From Rosse's Hills to Solway sea,”

“ Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar !
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea.”

He put his hand on the earlie's head ;
He shew'd him a rock, beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff, beneath his steed,*
And steel-dight nobles wip'd their e'e.

* King Alexander ; killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

- “The neist curse lights on Branxton Hills :
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner, red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.
- “A Scottish king shall come full keen ;
The ruddy lion beareth he :
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.
- “When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'*
“Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see ;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.
- “There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away ;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil blude that day.”
- “Enough, enough, of curse and ban ;
Some blessing shew thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie,” Corspatrick said,
“Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!”
- “The first of blessings I shall thee shew,
Is by a burn, that's called of bread ;†
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.
- “Beside that brigg, out-ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

* The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland concerning the fate of James IV., is well known.

† One of Thomas's rhymes, preserved by tradition, runs thus :

“The burn of breid
Shall run fow reid.”

Bannock-burn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the nam
of *bannock*, to a thick round cake of unleavened bread.

“ Beside a headless cross of stone,
 The libbards there shall lose the gree :
 The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
 And drink the Saxon blood sae free,
 The cross of stone they shall not know,
 So thick the corses there shall be.”

“ But tell me now,” said brave Dunbar,
 “ True Thomas, tell now unto me,
 What man shall rule the isle Britain,
 Ev’n from the north to the southern sea f”

“ A French queen shall bear the son,
 Shall rule all Britain to the sea :
 He of the Bruce’s blude shall come,
 As near as in the ninth degree.

“ The waters worship shall his race ;
 Likewise the waves of the farthest sea ;
 For they shall ride ower ocean wide,
 With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.”

PART THIRD.

MODERN.

WHEN seven years more had come and gone,
 Was war through Scotland spread,
 And Ruberslaw show’d high Dunyon
 His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
 Pitch’d palliouns took their room,
 And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
 Glanc’d gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
 Resounds the *ensenzie* ;*
 They rous’d the deer from Caddenhead,
 To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
 In Learmont’s high and ancient hall ;

* *Ensenzie*.—War-cry, or gathering word.

And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music, nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs* of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done ;
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale ;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along ;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Artur's table round :
The warrior of the lake ;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell ; †
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore ;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand ;
No med'cine could be found,

* *Quaighs*.— Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.
† Alluding to Thomas the Rhymer's celebrated romance of *the* Tristrem.

Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had prob'd the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue,
She bore the leech's part ;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween !
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove ;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head ;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brengwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye ;
Of that fam'd wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he ?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the list'ning throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand ;
With agony his heart is wrung :
O where is Isolde's lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue ?

She comes, she comes ! like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly :
She comes, she comes ! she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die : her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath :
The gentlest pair that Britain bare
United are in death.

There paus'd the harp ; its ling'ring sound,
 Died slowly on the ear ;
 The silent guests still bent around,
 For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak
 Nor ladies heav'd alone the sigh ;
 But, half asham'd, the rugged cheek
 Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tow'r,
 The mists of evening close ;
 In camp, in castle, or in bow'r,
 Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
 Dream'd o'er the woeful tale ;
 When footsteps light, across the bent,
 The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes :—"What, Richard, be
 Arise, my page, arise !
 What vent'rous wight, at dead of night,
 Dare step where Douglas lies !"

Then forth they rushed : by Leader's tide,
 A selcouth* sight they see—
 A hart and hind pace side by side,
 As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
 They stately move and slow ;
 Nor scare they at the gath'ring crowd,
 Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tow'r a message sped,
 As fast as page might run ;
 And Thomas started from his bed,
 And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red ;
 Never a word he spake but three ;—
 "My sand is run ; my thread is spun ;
 This sign regardeth me."

The Elfin harp his neck around,
 In minstrel guise, he hung ;

* Selcouth—Wondrous.

And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall;

On the grey tow'r, in lustre soft,
The autumn moon-beams fall.

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danc'd shimm'ring in the ray:
In deep'ning mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my father's ancient tow'r!
A long farewell," said he:

"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or pow'r,
Thou never more shalt be.

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,

And on thy hospitable hearth
The hare shall leave her young.

"Adieu! Adieu!" again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—

"Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!"

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As ling'ring yet he stood;

And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;

But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was 'Thomas seen.

THE FIRE-KING.

"The blessings of the evil Genii, which are curses, were upon him."
Eastern Tale.

[This ballad was written at the request of Mr Lewis, to be inserted in his "Tales of Wonder." It is the third in a series of four ballads, on the subject of Elementary Spirits. The story is, however, partly historical; for it is recorded, that, during the struggles of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, a knight-templar, called Saint-Alban, deserted to the Saracens, and defeated the Christians in many combats, till he was finally routed and slain, in a conflict with King Baldwin, under the walls of Jerusalem.]

BOLD knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear;
And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
At the tale of Count Albert, and fair Rosalie.

O see you that castle, so strong and so high?
And see you that lady, the tear in her eye?
And see you that palmer, from Palestine's land,
The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand?—

"Now palmer, grey palmer, O tell unto me,
What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie?
And how goes the warfare by Galilee's strand?
And how fare our nobles, the flow'r of the land?"

"O well goes the warfare by Galilee's wave,
For Gilead, and Nablous, and Ramah we have;
And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have won."—

A fair chain of gold 'mid her ringlets there hung;
O'er the palmer's grey locks the fair chain has she
flung:

"Oh palmer, grey palmer, this chain be thy fee,
For the news thou hast brought from the Holy
Countrie.

"O palmer, good palmer, by Galilee's wave,
O saw ye Count Albert, the gentle and brave?
When the Crescent went back, and the Red-cross
rush'd on,

O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon?"—

“O lady, fair lady, the tree green it grows;
 O lady, fair lady, the stream pure it flows;
 Your castle stands strong, and your hopes soar on high
 But lady, fair lady, all blossoms to die.

“The green boughs they wither, the thunderbolt falls,
 It leaves of your castle but levin-scorched walls;
 The pure stream runs muddy; the gay hope is gone;
 Count Albert is pris’ner on Mount Lebanon.”—

O she’s ta’en a horse, should be fleet at her speed;
 And she’s ta’en a sword, should be sharp at her need;
 And she has ta’en shipping for Palestine’s land,
 To ransom Count Albert from Soldanrie’s hand.

Small thought had Count Albert on fair Rosalie,
 Small thought on his faith, or his knighthood, had he;
 A heathenish damsel his light heart had won,
 The Soldan’s fair daughter of Mount Lebanon.

“Oh Christian, brave Christian, my love would’st
 thou be,

Three things must thou do ere I hearken to thee:
 Our laws and our worship on thee shalt thou take;
 And this thou shalt first do for Zulema’s sake.

“And, next, in the cavern, where burns evermore
 The mystical flame which the Curdmans adore,
 Alone, and in silence, three nights shalt thou wake;
 And this thou shalt next do for Zulema’s sake.

“And, last, thou shalt aid us with council and hand,
 To drive the Frank robber from Palestine’s land;
 For my lord and my love then Count Albert I’ll take
 When all this is accomplish’d for Zulema’s sake.”—

He has thrown by his helmet and cross-handled sword,
 Renouncing his knighthood, denying his Lord;
 He has ta’en the green caftan, and turban put on,
 For the love of the maiden of fair Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep deep under ground,
 Which fifty steel gates and steel portals surround,
 He has watch’d until day-break, but sight saw he none,
 Save the flame burning bright on its altar of stone.

Amaz’d was the princess, the soldan amaz’d,
 Sore murmur’d the priests as on Albert they gaz’d;

They search'd all his garments, and, under his weeds
They found, and took from him, his rosary beads.

Again in the cavern, deep deep under ground,
He watch'd the lone night, while the winds whistled
round ;

Far off was their murmur, it came not more nigh,
The flame burn'd unmov'd, and nought else did he spy.

Loud murmur'd the priests, and amaz'd was the king,
While many dark spells of their witchcraft they sing ;
They search'd Albert's body, and, lo ! on his breast
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father impress'd.

The priests they erase it with care and with pain,
And the recreant return'd to the cavern again ;
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell !—
It was his good angel, who bade him farewell !

High bristled his hair, his heart flutter'd and beat,
And he turn'd him five steps, half resolv'd to retreat ;
But his heart it was harden'd, his purpose was gone,
When he thought on the maiden of fair Lebanon.

Scarce pass'd he the archway, the threshold scarce trod,
When the winds from the four points of heav'n were
abroad ;

They made each steel portal to rattle and ring,
And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rock'd the cavern whene'er he drew nigh,
The fire on the altar blaz'd bick'ring and high ;
In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim
The dreadful approach of the Monarch of Flame.

Unmeasur'd in height, undistinguish'd in form,
His breath it was lightning, his voice it was storm ;
I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame,
When he saw in his terrors the Monarch of Flame.

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmer'd through
smoke,
And Mount Lebanon shook as the monarch he
spoke :—

“ With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and
no more,
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore.”

The cloud-shrouded arm gives the weapon; and, *see*
 The recreant receives the charm'd gift on his knee;
 The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires,
 As, borne on his whirlwind, the Phantom retires.

Count Albert has arm'd him the Paynim among,
 Though his heart it was false, yet his arm it was
 strong;
 And the Red-cross wax'd faint, and the Crescent
 came on,
 From the day he commanded on Mount Lebanon.

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
 The sands of Samaar drank the blood of the brave;
 Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint
 John,
 With Salem's King Baldwin, against him came on.

The war-cymbals clatter'd, the trumpets replied,
 The lances were-couch'd, and they clos'd on each
 side;
 And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew,
 Till he pierc'd the thick tumult King Baldwin unto.

Against the charm'd blade which Count Albert did
 wield
 The fence had been vain of the King's Red-cross
 shield;
 But a Page thrust him forward the monarch before,
 And cleft the proud turban the renegade wore.

So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stoop'd low
 Before the cross'd shield, to his steel sardie-bow;
 And scarce had he bent to the Red-cross his head,—
 “*Bonne grace, notre Dame,*” he unwittingly said.

Sore sigh'd the charm'd sword, for its virtue was o'er,
 It sprung from his grasp, and was never seen more;
 But true men have said, that the lightning's red wing
 Did waft back the brand to the dread Fire-King.

He clench'd his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand;
 He stretch'd, with one buffet, that Page on the strand;
 As back from the stripling the broken casque roll'd,
 You might see the blue eyes, and the ringlets of gold.

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare
On those death-swimming eye-balls, and blood-clotted
hair;

For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.

The Saracens, Curdmans, and Ishmaelites yield
To the scallop, the saltier, and crossletted shield;
And the eagles were gorg'd with the infidel dead,
From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphtali's head.

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain.—
Oh, who is you Paynim lies stretch'd 'mid the slain?
And who is you Page lying cold at his knee?—
Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

The Lady was buried in Salem's bless'd bound,
The Count he was left to the vulture and hound:
Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring;
His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
How the Red Cross it conquer'd, the Crescent it fell;
And lords and gay ladies have sigh'd, 'mid their glee,
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

FREDERICK AND ALICE.

[This tale is imitated, rather than translated, from a fragment introduced in Goethe's "Claudina von Villa Bella," where it is sung by a member of a gang of banditti, to engage the attention of the family, while his companions break into the castle.]

FRED'RICK leaves the land of France,
Homewards hastes his steps to measure;
Careless casts the parting glance,
On the scene of former pleasure;

Joying in his prancing steed,
Keen to prove his untried blade,
Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Helpless, ruin'd, left forlorn,
Lovely Alice wept alone;

Mourn'd o'er love's fond contract torn,
Hope, and peace, and honour flown.

Mark her breast's convulsive throbs !
See, the tear of anguish flows :—
Mingling soon with bursting sobs,
Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she curs'd, and wild she pray'd ;
Sev'n long days and nights are o'er ;
Death in pity brought his aid,
As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,
Faithless Fred'rick onward rides ;
Marking, blithe, the morning's glance
Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the boding sound,
As the tongue of yonder tow'r
Slowly, to the hills around,
Told the fourth, the fated hour ?

Starts the steed, and snuffs the air,
Yet no cause of dread appears ;
Bristles high the rider's hair,
Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desp'rate, as his terrors rise,
In the steed the spur he hides ;
From himself in vain he flies ;
Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Sev'n long days, and sev'n long nights,
Wild he wander'd, woe the while !
Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,
Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the sev'nth sad night descends ;
Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour ;
While the deaf'ning thunder lends
All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,
Where his head shall Fred'rick hide ?
Where, but in yon ruined aisle,
By the lightning's flash descried.

To the portal, dank and low,
Fast his steed the wand'rer bound;
Down a ruin'd staircase slow,
Next his darkling way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie;
Glimm'ring lights are seen to glide!—
"Blessed Mary, hear my cry!
Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"—

Often lost their quiv'ring beam,
Still the lights move slow before,
Till they rest their ghastly gleam
Right against an iron door.

Thund'ring voices from within,
Mix'd with peals of laughter, rose;
As they fell, a solemn strain
Lent its wild and wondrous close!

'Midst the din, he seem'd to hear
Voice of friends, by death remov'd;—
Well he knew that solemn air,
'Twas the lay that Alice lov'd.—

Hark! for now a solemn knell
Four times on the still night broke;
Four times, at its deaden'd swell,
Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthen'd clangours die,
Slowly opes the iron door!
Straight a banquet met his eye,
But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend;
All with black the board was spread;
Girt by parent, brother, friend,
Long since number'd with the dead!

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
Ghastly smiling, points a seat;
All arose, with thund'ring sound;
All th' expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell;—

“Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
Perjur’d, bid the light farewell?”

THE WILD HUNTSMEN.

[This is a translation, or rather an imitation, of the *Wilde Jäger* of the German poet Burger. The tradition upon which it is founded bears, that formerly a Wildgrave, or keeper of a royal forest, nam'd Falkenburgh, was so much addicted to the pleasures of the chase, and otherwise so extremely prodigate and cruel, that he not only followed this unhallowed amusement on the Sabbath, and other days consecrated to religious duty, but accompanied it with the most unheard-of oppression upon the poor peasants, who were under his vassalage. When this second Nimrod died, the people adopted a superstition, founded probably on the many various uncouth sounds heard in the depth of a German forest, during the silence of the night. They conceived they still heard the cry of the Wildgrave's hounds; and the well-known cheer of the deceased hunter, the sounds of his horses' feet, and the rustling of the branches before the game, the pack, and the sportsmen, are also distinctly discriminated; but the phantoms are rarely, if ever, visible.]

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake,
While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep, the bell had toll'd.

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
When, spurring from opposing sides,
Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May ;
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He wav'd his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cried, " Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
 What sport on earth, or sea, or sky,
 To match the princely chase, afford?"

" Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"
 Cried the fair youth, with silver voice ;
 " And for devotion's choral swell,
 Exchange the rude unhallow'd noise.

" To-day, th' ill-omen'd chase forbear,
 Yon bell yet summons to the fane ;
 To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
 To-morrow thou may'st mourn in vain."

" Away, and sweep the glades along !"
 The Sable Hunter hoarse replies ;
 " To mutt'ring monks leave matin-song,
 And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurr'd his ardent steed,
 And, launching forward with a bound,
 " Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
 Would leave the jovial horn and hound?"

" Hence, if our manly sport offend !
 With pious fools go chant and pray :—
 Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow'd friend ;
 Halloo, halloo ! and, hark away !"

The Wildgrave spurr'd his courser light,
 O'er moss and moor, o'erholt and hill ;
 And on the left, and on the right,
 Each Stranger Horseman follow'd still.

Up springs, from yonder tangl'd thorn,
 A stag more white than mountain snow ;
 And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
 " Hark forward, forward ! holla, ho !"

A heedless wretch has cross'd the way ;
 He gasps, the thund'ring hoofs below ;—

But, live who can, or die who may,
Still, "Forward, forward!" on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with autumn's blessings crown'd.
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
A husbandman, with toil embrown'd :

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
"Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd
In scorching hour of fierce July."—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
Th' impetuous Earl no warning heeds
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!"—
Then loudly rung his bugle horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"

So said, so done:—A single bound
Clears the poor labourer's humble pale;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man, and horse, and hound, and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the madd'ning throng.

Again up-rous'd, the tim'rous prey
Scours moss, and moor, and holt, and hill
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd,
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss, and moor, and holt, and hill,
His track the steady blood-hounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall ;—
 “ O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
 These herds, a widow’s little all ;
 These flocks, an orphan’s fleecy care.”

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 The Earl nor pray’r nor pity heeds,
 But furious keeps the onward way.

—“ Unmanner’d dog ! To stop my sport
 Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
 Though human spirits, of thy sort,
 Were tenants of these carrion kine !” —

Again he winds his bugle horn,
 “ Hark forward, forward, holla, ho !”
 And through the herd, in ruthless scorn
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall ;
 Down sinks their mangl’d herdsman near ;
 The murd’rous cries the stag appal,—
 Again he starts, new-nerv’d by fear.

With blood besmear’d, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
 He seeks, amid the forest’s gloom,
 The humble hermit’s hallow’d bow’r.

But man, and horse, and horn, and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go ;
 The sacred chapel rung around
 With, “ Hark away ! and, holla, ho !”

All mild, amid the route profane,
 The holy hermit pour’d his pray’r ;—
 “ Forbear with blood God’s house to stain ;
 Revere his altar, and forbear !

“ The meanest brute has rights to plead,
 Which, wrong’d by cruelty, or pride,
 Draw vengeance on the ruthless head :—
 Be warn’d at length, and turn aside.”

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads ;
 The Black, wild whooping, points the prey .—

Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

“Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs’ sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!”

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
“Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”—
But off, on whirlwind’s pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse, and man, and horn, and hound,
And clamour of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle sound,
A deadly silence reign’d alone.

Wild gaz’d the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn;
In vain to call; for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reach’d his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quick’ning spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
Dark, as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o’er the sinner’s humbl’d head
At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

“Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate Spirits’ harden’d tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

“Be chas’d for ever through the wood;
For ever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God’s meanest creature is his child.”—

'Twas hush'd : One flash, of sombre glare,
 With yellow ting'd the forests brown;
 Up rose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
 And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill;
 A rising wind began to sing;
 And louder, louder, louder still,
 Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call ;— Her entrails rend :
 From yawning rifts, with many a yell.
 Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
 The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell ;
 His eye like midnight lightning glows,
 His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
 With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
 Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
 And, " Hark away, and holla, ho !"

With wild despair's reverted eye,
 Close, close behind, he marks the throng.
 With bloody fangs, and eager cry ;
 In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
 Till time itself shall have an end :
 By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
 At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
 That oft the lated peasant hears ;
 Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
 When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
 For human pride, for human woe,
 When, at his midnight mass, he hears
 The infernal cry of, " Holla, ho !"

WAR SONG

OF THE

ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS,

WRITTEN DURING THE APPREHENSION OF AN INVASION.

To horse! to horse! the standard flies,
 The bugles sound the call;
 The Gallic navy stems the seas,
 The voice of Battle's on the breeze,
 Arouse ye, one and all!

From high Dunedin's tow'rs we come,
 A band of brothers true;
 Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
 With Scotland's hardy thistle crown'd;
 We boast the red and blue.*

Though tamely crouch to Gallia's frown,
 Dull Holland's tardy train;
 Their ravish'd toys though Romans mourn,
 Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
 And, foaming, gnaw the chain;

O! had they mark'd th' avenging call
 Their brethren's murder gave,
 Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
 Nor patriot valour, desp'rate grown,
 Sought freedom in the grave!

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
 In Freedom's temple born,
 Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
 To hail a master in our isle,
 Or brook a victor's scorn?

No! though destruction o'er the land
 Come pouring as a flood,
 The sun, that sees our falling day,
 Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
 And set that night in blood.

* The Royal Colours.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
 Or plunder's bloody gain;
 Unbrib'd, unbought, our swords we draw,
 To guard our King, to fence our Law,
 Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
 Shall fan the tri-color,
 Or footstep of invader rude,
 With rapine foul, and red with blood,
 Pollute our happy shore,—

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
 Adieu each tender tie!
 Resolv'd, we mingle in the tide,
 Where charging squadrons furious ride,
 To conquer, or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
 High sounds our bugle call;
 Combin'd by honour's sacred tie,
 Our word is, *Jaws and Liberty!*
 March forward, one and all!

THE NORMAN HORSE-SHOE.

[The Welch, inhabiting a mountainous country, and possessing only an inferior breed of horses, were usually unable to encounter the shock of the Anglo-Norman cavalry. Occasionally, however, they were successful in repelling the invaders; and the following verses are supposed to celebrate a defeat of CLARE, Earl of Striguil and Pembroke, and of NEVILLE, Baron of Chepstow, Lords-Marchers of Monmouthshire. Rymny is a stream which divides the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan: Caerphili, the scene of the supposed battle, is a vale upon its banks, dignified by the ruins of a very ancient castle.

AIR—The War-song of the Men of Glamorgan

I.

RED glows the forge in Striguil's bounds,
 And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
 And armourers, with iron toil,
 Barb many a steed for battle's broil.

Foul fall the hand which bends the steel
 Around the courser's thund'ring heel,
 That e'er shall dint a sable wound
 On fair Glamorgan's velvet ground !

II.

From Chepstow's tow'rs, ere dawn of morn,
 Was heard afar the bugle horn ;
 And forth, in banded pomp and pride,
 Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride.
 They swore, their banners broad should gleam,
 In crimson light, on Rymny's stream ;
 They vow'd, Caerphili's sod should feel
 The Norman charger's spurning heel.

III.

And sooth they swore—the sun arose,
 And Rymny's wave with crimson glows ;
 For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
 Roll'd down the stream to Severn's tide !
 And sooth they vow'd—the trampled green
 Show'd where hot Neville's charge had been :
 In every sable hoof-tramp stood
 A Norman horseman's curdling blood !

IV.

Old Chepstow's brides may curse the toil,
 That arm'd stout Clare for Cambrian broil ;
 Their orphans long the art may rue,
 For Neville's war-horse forg'd the shoe.
 No more the stamp of armed steed
 Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead ;
 Nor trace be there, in early spring,
 Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.

THE DYING BARD.

[The Welch tradition bears, that a Bard, on his death-bed, demanded his harp, and played the air to which these verses are adapted; requesting, that it might be performed at his funeral.]

AIR—Daffyd's Gangwen.

I.

DINAS EMLINN, lament; for the moment is nigh,
When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die:
No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave,
And mix his wild notes with the wild dashing wave.

II.

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade,
Unhonour'd shall flourish, unhonour'd shall fade;
For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
That view'd them with rapture, with rapture that sung.

III.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride,
And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side;
But where is the harp shall give life to their name?
And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame?

IV.

And Oh, Dinas Emlinn! thy daughters so fair,
Who heave the white bosom, and wave the dark hair;
What tuneful enthusiast shall worship their eye,
When half of their charms with Cadwallon shall die?

V.

Then adieu, silver Teivi! I quit thy lov'd scene,
To join the dim choir of the bards who have been;
With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the Old,
And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

VI.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn! still green be thy shades,
Unconquer'd thy warriors, and matchless thy maids!
And thou, whose faint warblings my weakness can tell,
Farewell, my lov'd Harp! my last treasure, farewell!

THE MAID OF TORO.

O, low shone the sun on the fair lake of Toro,
 And weak were the whispers that wav'd the dark
 wood,
 All as a fair maiden, bewilder'd in sorrow,
 Sorely sigh'd to the breezes, and wept to the flood.
 "O, saints! from the mansions of bliss lowly bending;
 Sweet Virgin! who hearest the suppliant's cry;
 Now grant my petition, in anguish ascending,
 My Henry restore, or let Eleanor die!"

All distant and faint were the sounds of the battle,
 With the breezes they rise, with the breezes they
 fail,
 Till the shout, and the groan, and the conflict's dread
 rattle,
 And the chase's wild clamour, came loading the
 gale.
 Breathless she gaz'd on the woodlands so dreary;
 Slowly approaching a warrior was seen;
 Life's ebbing tide mark'd his footsteps so weary,
 Cleft was his helmet, and woe was his mien.

"O, save thee, fair maid, for our armies are flying!
 O, save thee, fair maid, for thy guardian is low!
 Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave Henry is lying;
 And fast through the woodland approaches the
 foe."—

Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
 And scarce could she hear them, benumb'd with
 despair:
 And when the sun sunk on the sweet lake of Toro,
 For ever he set to the Brave, and the Fair.

H LLEVELLYN.

[In the spring of 1605, a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition, perished by losing his way on the mountain Hellvellyn. His remains were not discovered till three months afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland.]

I CLIMB'D the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleam'd misty
and wide;
All was still, save, by fits when the eagle was yell-
ing,
And starting around me the echoes replied.
On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was
bending,
And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I mark'd the sad spot where the wand'rer
had died.

Dark green was that spot mid the brown mountain-
heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretch'd in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather,
Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless clay.
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute fav'rite attended,
The much-lov'd remains of her master defended,
And chas'd the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slum-
ber;
When the wind wav'd his garment, how oft didst
thou start;
How many long days and long weeks didst thou
number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
And, Oh! was it meet, that,—no requiem read o'er
him,
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before him,—
Unhonour'd the Pilgrim from life should depart?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
The tap'stry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
And pages stand mute by the canopied pall :
Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are
gleaming ;
In the proudly-arch'd chapel the banners are beaming ;
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
Lamenting a Chief of the People should fall.
But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb ;
When, wilder'd, he drops from some cliff huge in
stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
And more stately thy couch by this desart lake lying,
Thy obsequies sung by the grey plover flying,
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
In the arms of Hellvellyn and Catchedicam.

THE END.

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